RETHINKING THEORY

THE LIFE AND AFTERLIFE of Isabeau of Bavaria

Tracy Adams

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RETHINKING THEORY

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The Life and Afterlife of Isabeau of Bavaria

TRACY ADAMS

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For Glenn, Danny, and Elf

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INTRODUCTION

I FIRST ENCOUNTERED Queen of France Isabeau of Bavaria (1371–1435) in Christine de Pizan scholarship. The queen in this context is frequently deployed as a foil, her greed and turpitude contrasted with the moralizing Christine's righteousness.[1] Because the queen is a peripheral figure in studies of Christine's work, I did not question the depiction initially. On the contrary, I was guilty of perpetuating it, uncritically, in one of my own articles.[2] But the frequent references to the queen as a cupidinous woman of dubious morality began to strike me as out of place in a body of scholarship devoted to a figure who was herself a champion of women. Moreover, the scholarship gave no documentation for the charges. Increasingly curious, I began to search for what might lie behind them, turning to histories of medieval France for information.

In these volumes I discovered the lascivious spendthrift with whom I was familiar from Christine de Pizan scholarship. A history of the Hundred Years Wars published in 2008 remarks coyly that "il [Louis of Orleans] serre d'un peu trop près sa belle-soeur, la jeune et jolie Isabeau de Bavière, la reine. Cette brunette ardente a vingt-deux ans; son mari est fou, et son séduisant beau-frère adore la faire danser. A partir de là, on peut tout imaginer" (he [Louis of Orleans] clung a bit too closely to his sister-in-law, the young and pretty Isabeau of Bavaria, the queen. This ardent brunette was twenty-two; her husband was insane, and her seductive brother-in-law loved to dance with her. Beyond that, we can imagine all sorts of things).[3] A study of medieval nobility depicts her stashing away a personal fortune as her people suffered.[4] A history of the University of Paris decries the destructive results of her supposed political opportunism: "En soutenant des partis contradictoires, la reine Isabeau de Bavière conduisit la France à des luttes fratricides dont l'enjeu était la conquête de pouvoir" (By supporting opposing parties, the queen Isabeau of Bavaria led France into fraternal battles the stakes of which were power).[5] A study of Capetian women and regency claims that "Isabeau increased her wealth and power but preferred a life of entertain-

ment and celebration to the establishment of political domination. According to the drift of the moment, she allied herself with whomever seemed likely to triumph."[6] She is regarded as empty-headed and too attached to her German family: "On ignorait ses idées. En avait-elle d'ailleurs? Seules ses inclinations étaient claires. Elle était très liée à son frère Louis de Bavière." (No one knew her ideas. Indeed, did she have any? Only her inclinations were clear: she was extremely close to her brother, Louis of Bavaria.)[7] Her incompetence is taken for granted: "La reine semble surtout n'avoir eu aucune capacité politique" (The queen seems above all to have had no political skill).[8] She is an unnatural mother who had long since "épuisé les joies de la maternité. Une nouvelle grossesse ne pouvait la réjouir qu'en lui offrant le prétexte de se faire octroyer encore quelque bagatelle, un droit de péage, une abbaye, un château entouré de bonnes terres" (lost all joy in maternity. She took pleasure in a new pregnancy only insofar as it offered her the pretext for claiming a new gift, the right to a toll road, an abbey, a chateau surrounded by productive land).[9] In a history of Joan of Arc we learn that Charles VII, dauphin led to Rheims by Joan of Arc, "might have quickly united the country were it not for the base act of a wanton woman," Isabeau of Bavaria.[10] In earlier years, Isabeau had "supported the debauched Duke of Orléans against Philip the Bold," but later she teamed up with Philip the Bold's son, Jean sans Peur, sometimes known in English as John the Fearless, to conspire against her son, Charles. From there she went on to take over the government, and, from this position, she "kindled the flames of civil war." The author concludes with the pronouncement: "In the name of this unnatural woman, who had been exiled from Paris on account of her scandalous behavior, the Burgundians ravaged the centre and south of France."

And as if this were not enough, Isabeau is alleged to have been grossly overweight. "At the end of her life," we are told, "she was grotesquely fat, to the point that her obesity made it doubtful that she could act as regent of the kingdom. She suffered from gout, and by 1425 she had to get around in a wheelchair."[11] Referring to the period of 1416–17 when the Armagnacs held power in Paris and the two dauphins Louis and Jean had just died in quick succession, another historian places the primary blame for Isabeau's failure to take control of the government on her excess poundage: "Il restait Isabeau. Mais alourdie par l'embonpoint, peut-être désemparée par le décès de ses deux fils, elle ne semble pas avoir joué alors un rôle prépondérant dans la vie politique." (Only Isabeau remained. But overweight, and perhaps dis-

tressed by the deaths of her two sons, she seems not to have played an important role in political life.)[12]

Surely where there is smoke there is fire, I thought. And yet, when I tried to verify the charges, I could not. The histories from which I have just quoted do not cite contemporary references, but each other, in a seemingly endless feedback loop. Moreover, their favorite adjectives for describing the queen—wanton, cupidinous, obese—give pause, representing as they do a litany of traditional misogynistic complaints. Claims that on the surface suggest misogyny deserve skepticism.

Thus I continued to research, seeking more specialized information, and finally came upon the small body of scholarship specifically focused on the queen. The difference between the Isabeau I discovered there and the promiscuous creature of the more general histories was nothing less than astounding. To begin, the few scholars who have studied her in any detail are unanimous in their assessment that the adultery charge is a fantasy, resulting primarily from the misreading of two documents dating from the queen's lifetime. The first is a single paragraph in the chronicle of Michel Pintoin, known today as the *Religieux* or Monk of St. Denis. Because the passage bears the weight of proving what would have been considered by contemporary standards the queen's incestuous affair (an affair with her brother-in-law would have constituted incest), I reproduce it here in full. Pintoin writes that in spring of 1405 Jacques Legrand, a well-known preacher whose patron was none other than the king's brother Louis, the Duke of Orleans, gave a sermon at court that targeted the duke and Isabeau.[13]

The sermon began, writes Pintoin:

> In tua curia domina Venus solium occupans, ipsi eciam obsequntur ebrietas et commessacio, que noctes vertunt in diem, continuantes choreas dissolutas. Hee maledicte et infernales pedissece, curiam assidue ambientes, mores viresque enervant plurium et impediunt sepius ne milites vel scutiferi delicati adeant expediciones bellicas, ne in aliqua parte corporis deformentur.
>
> [Lady Venus occupies the throne in your court: certainly drunkenness and debauchery follow her, turning night into day, with continual dissolute dancing. Oh, the cursed and infernal lackeys, who constantly inhabit your court, greatly sap morals and strength and impede soldiers' going on military expeditions, squeamish as they are about becoming deformed in different body parts.][14]

Pintoin then interjects that Legrand next turned his attention to fashion at the court:

> Ad dissolucionem eciam habituum, cujus inventrix regina fuerat principalis, descendens, cum ipsam mulipliciter reprobasset, subintulit: "Hec et multa alia, o regina, in opprobrium curie tue dicuntur. Que si non velis credere, in habitu mulieris paupercule eundo per civitatem, audies ab infinitis personis."
> [Moving on to the dissoluteness of their clothing, of which the queen had been a principal instigator and whom he reproached in many ways, he carried on: "This and many other things, oh Queen, are said about your court to its disgrace. If you do not want to believe this, if you put on the clothes of a poor woman and walk through the streets of the city, you will hear it from many people."][15]

That Louis of Orleans was Legrand's patron makes the likelihood that the preacher would publicly accuse him of adultery with the queen remote, to say the least. Furthermore, as R. C. Famiglietti points out, the passage in no way supports the charge of adultery. "From the information given by the Monk of Saint-Denis about the sermon, however, it appears that the only thing Legrand held against Isabeau was the fact that she had introduced new styles of dress which he could not approve. Of course, since she was the queen, he considered her responsible in general for the actions of her courtiers. But he seems to have thought she was not aware of the truly scandalous nature of their behaviour."[16]

Famiglietti then observes that a scurrilous pamphlet called the "Songe véritable," making the rounds at roughly the same time, neatly proves that rumors of queenly adultery could not have been circulating in 1405–6, for among the faults attributed to Isabeau therein, adultery is conspicuously lacking. The pamphlet, he writes, "is a valuable aid in the assessment of the charges made by scholars against the queen, for here is a work that attacks Isabeau with vehemence, and yet states that her reputation was intact until a sudden change occurred. . . . If, indeed, there had been even the merest suspicions of an adulterous relationship between the queen and the duke of Orleans, would not the author have used them somewhere in this poem? He was certainly close enough to the court to have heard such gossip, if it existed, for he was able to name and vilify in the 'Songe' many members of Isabeau's household."[17]

The second source that has been held out as proof of the queen's adultery

is the Treaty of Troyes, signed in 1420 to declare Henry V of England heir to the throne of France. However, recent historians explain that to read the Treaty of Troyes as the queen's admission of her own guilt is to mistranslate a common expression used in the treaty, "so-called" (*soi-disant*).[18] The context of the expression is as follows:

> Considéré les orribles et énormes crimes et deliz perpetrez oudit royaume de France par Charles *soy disant* daulphin de viennois, il est accordé que nous, ne nostredit filz le Roy Henry, ne aussi nostre chier filz Phelippe duc de Bourgoigne, ne traicterons aucunement de paix ou de concorde avecques ledit Charles, ne ferons ou ferons traictier senon du conseil et assentement de tous et chascun de nous trois, et des trois estas de deux royaumes.
> [Considering the horrible and enormous crimes perpetrated upon the Kingdom of France by Charles, the *so-called* dauphin of Vienne, it has been agreed that neither ourselves nor our son the King Henry nor our very dear son Philip the Duke of Burgundy will make any peace treaties with said Charles, nor will we make or have any made except with the council and agreement of all three of us and the three estates of our two kingdoms.][19]

Early historians, already believing in Isabeau's promiscuity, read *soi-disant* as a veiled reference to Charles's paternity and wove the insult into a narrative of degraded motherhood. But recent historians agree that the interpretation cannot be justified: *soi-disant,* they explain, was part of standard insult vocabulary, challenging the bearer of a title's fitness for the title. Employed in exchanges between Charles of Orleans and his cousin Jean sans Peur, the insult had a long history. As Pintoin reveals, Charles VI himself used the expression to refer to his son, future Charles VII, to whom he denied the title of dauphin for his role in the assassination of Jean sans Peur. As far as Charles VI is concerned, his son is the "so-called" rather than true dauphin. Just after the assassination of Jean sans Peur, writes Pintoin, a flurry of letters sent out by the king spread the news of the act. These letters concluded with the announcement that the dauphin would henceforth be forbidden any title but that of "so-called dauphin."[20]

In addition to adultery, the queen has been cleared of the other crimes with which she has long been charged. In a scholarly biography in German of 1969 Heidrunn Kimm extricated the queen's black legend from what is verifiable, revealing the influence of nineteenth-century anti-German senti-

ment upon her political reputation. Kimm's work was followed by a series of articles by Yann Grandeau published during the 1970s, in which the author made a strong case for an active, politically savvy queen, a woman "dont l'intelligence était vive" (whose intelligence was acute).[21] She alone of the king's entourage understood the gravity of the coup of Jean sans Peur of 1408, writes Grandeau, and the necessity of grooming the dauphin Louis to take the place of his father at that point if the Valois dynasty was to survive. "Menant le jeu des coulisses et donnant à chacun l'exemple de la sérénité," he continues, "elle poursuivit avec clairvoyance et ténacité une politique centriste." (Directing the game from the sidelines and giving an impression of serenity to all, she followed a centrist political line with foresight and tenacity.). In a 1981 article, Theodor Straub revisited the black legend to show its lack of basis in history. R. C. Famiglietti's *Royal Intrigue* of 1986 offers a sympathetic portrait of the woman who promoted her son, the dauphin Louis of Guyenne, as a safeguard against the monarchy's disintegration.[22] Rachel C. Gibbons's Alexander prize–winning "Isabeau of Bavaria, Queen of France: The Creation of an Historical Villainess" and 1997 doctoral dissertation devoted to Isabeau studied the queen's political astuteness. Gibbons characterizes her as the sole member of the royal family capable of preserving the monarchy, a woman "whose often adept handling of diplomacy, including her support and promotion of the dauphin Louis during his teenage years, have been largely ignored or dismissed in histories of the period."[23]

Isabeau's career, then, has been revised. But this scholarship only makes the continued existence of the queen's black legend all the more surprising. As Ronald Schechter has written, "Once a fact becomes 'common knowledge' the historian is released from the obligation to cite a source, and only a determined effort to falsify it can dislodge it from the *bricolage* of generally accepted facts that constitute the historical canon."[24] This may be true. And yet, in the bodies of writings devoted to other notorious queens, one generally observes a clear distinction between the way they are portrayed in serious history, on the one hand, and popular history and historical fiction, on the other. Recent studies of the Religious Wars in France recognize Catherine de Médicis to be a victim of partisan propaganda.[25] Likewise, scholarly studies of Marie-Antoinette take their subject seriously, considering that queen carefully within her context.[26] The difference between the crimes that clearly biased contemporaries report Marie-Antoinette to have committed (for example, incest) and her verifiable acts is routinely maintained.

Despite the excellent scholarship already available, then, work on Isabeau remains to be done. The present study originates in my interest in the incommensurateness between the queen's reputation and the historically verifiable elements of her career. I began by rereading the historical sources, all of which had all been uncovered and studied, and I reiterate what other studies devoted to the queen have discovered: that the contemporary evidence does not support the black legend. On the contrary, the Isabeau who emerges from the sources is a diligent peacemaker, devoted to her mad husband and dedicated to saving the throne for her son. Thus a major goal of this study is to understand the tenacity of the black legend. I trace the evolution of the mythology surrounding the queen, explaining why it has been so resistant to challenge. But beyond this, I have come to believe that Isabeau's life is in itself worthy of further study. The queen's career has been misunderstood, I argue, with some attributing her too much authority and some too little. This is because neither the role assigned her nor her performance of it has been reconstructed against contemporary expectations of what she was meant to be doing. Royal ordinances dated 1402, 1403, and 1407 seem to grant extensive regency powers to the queen. Certain of the depictions of her within contemporary chronicles suggest that she was considered an important figure and regarded with reverence. Yet, other depictions dating from her lifetime belie the image of a powerful Isabeau. She receives virtually none of the attention that would indicate the anxiety generally associated with powerful women. Unlike the queen of her grandson, Henry VI, Marguerite of Anjou, who was also summoned to a position of authority by her husband's insanity, Isabeau is never condemned in the chronicles for warmongering or overstepping the bounds of her office.[27] Nor is she ever during her own lifetime accused of illicit affairs, an attack routinely leveled at powerful women.[28] These apparently conflicting sources have led to the widely diverse assessments among modern historians of the extent and nature of Isabeau's authority. But the contemporary documents cohere when Isabeau is placed in a framework that has received a good deal of attention in recent studies: that of the mediator queen. The mediator queen fulfilled a multivalent role that included not only ritualistic functions associated with peacemaking but also the practical activities of intercession, arbitration, and filling in for her husband when he was absent.[29] A complex of images defined and idealized the role, the most potent of which were Esther and the Virgin Mary.

The role of the medieval and early modern mediator queen has been discussed in a number of contributions over the past two decades by such

scholars as John Carmi Parsons, Fanny Cosandey, Lois L. Huneycutt, Margaret Howell, Elizabeth McCartney, Helen E. Maurer, and others.[30] Although the role varied across time and space, it can be generalized by the quality that Louise Olga Fradenburg designates "interstitiality" or "in-betweenness." Mediator queens caused things to happen through networking, through working behind the scenes. Fradenburg writes that "the condition of many forms of queenship may be found not so much in the glamorized, special suspended states associated with communitas as in the fact of queens' being so often at the nodal points of cultural work."[31] Isabeau's role in the government as articulated in royal ordinances demonstrates that her primary function was mediatory. Charged with appeasing dangerous rivals, she worked from a position located both inside and outside of the Royal Council, over which she presided when the king was mentally incapable of doing so. A substitute for the king, acting on her husband's behalf, she possessed no real power independent of him. Throughout her career she styled herself as a mediator, as the force guiding the Valois dynasty through the illness of the king, working to keep the kingdom intact by reconciling its warring factions.

So that Isabeau's career as a mediator queen can be examined afresh, the first two chapters of this study aim to free the queen from the burden of her black legend. A pivotal third chapter then lays out recent theories about mediator queens and, through a discussion of Isabeau's own mediating activity, argues that her career gains coherence when reexamined within this framework. In each of the five remaining chapters, I explore a different narrative strand introduced in the opening chapters. The overall format, thus, is not chronological, but thematic.

Because many readers will not be familiar with the details of this queen's career, chapter one, "Isabeau of Bavaria: Her Life," narrates the major events of her life against the tangled and deadly Armagnac-Burgundian feud and the Hundred Years War. But the chapter has another purpose: to demonstrate how different the queen's story appears when it is emptied of the bias that has so often marked it. Certainly any narrative must be recounted from a perspective, and I will justify mine in chapter three. However, quite different from perspectives are inaccuracies, and, as we have seen, the notion of Isabeau's immorality is an inaccuracy, or, least, it cannot be verified. It is important, therefore, to approach the documents again. This is not to whitewash the queen, but to ask which interpretations the evidence will bear when read minus the lingering influence of the tales of debauchery. I suggest that

the story that appears is that of a woman who, thrust into the formidable task of preserving the monarchy from the incursions of the king's powerful male relatives, exercised her role with skill and dignity according to a traditional model that permitted women to take on the role of an absent man, carving out a role for herself that I describe in later chapters as coregency.

Chapter two, "Isabeau of Bavaria: Her Afterlife," explores the queen's status as *lieu de mémoire,* to borrow the terminology coined by Pierre Nora. The transformation of her life into a scandalous narrative took place in several distinct phases. The first was the development of the legend of her promiscuity. Although no evidence, at least official, suggests that the English believed Charles VII to be a bastard, the fact that claims to the English throne —most notably that of Edward, son of Henry VI—were countered with the charge that the claimant was illegitimate raises the suspicion that a similar strategy might have been employed to harm Charles VII. Once in place, the rumor of Isabeau's promiscuity developed in a number of different directions, giving birth to a rich folklore. A second, independent strand of the black legend was developed by sixteenth- and seventeenth-century legal historians concerned with female regency. As the king slowly consolidated his power beginning in the late sixteenth century, the ubiquitous factionalism of the fifteenth century became incomprehensible to legal historians studying that period. Reading Isabeau's depiction in chronicles and official documents, some legal historians began to see her flexible alliance building, standard behavior during her own time, as a negative tendency, as a sign of her political divisiveness. In the eighteenth century, the discovery of documents related to the *Cour amoureuse,* the renowned love court at the time of Charles VI, shored up the image of the debauched Isabeau. Later in the century, the various negative traits attributed her converge in the outrageous history of the queens of France by Louise de Keralio, whose Isabeau is a prototype for Marie-Antoinette. During the nineteenth century, magnificently entertaining stories of an adulterous, luxurious, meddlesome, scheming, and spendthrift queen flourished under the pens of historians like Michelet and, later Marcel Thibault, who, even as he claimed to be regarding the evidence surrounding the queen objectively, incorporated her story into a larger narrative of French nationalism.[32] It is hardly surprising that patriotic nineteenth-century French historians would be biased against a Bavarian queen. But what is perhaps surprising is their intensely ludic attitude towards the queen. They freely admit that their interpretations of Isabeau are speculative but go on proposing them nonetheless. Isabeau's usefulness as a figure against which to

construct nationalism appears to have been more compelling than any obligation to historical accuracy.

The first two chapters, then, are intended to wipe the slate on Isabeau clean and allow a beginning from zero. In chapter three, I present and support the framework I have chosen for retelling Isabeau's story. Drawing on the insights offered by recent scholarship on mediating queens and medieval violence and its remedies, the chapter builds a context within which Isabeau's search for peace appears responsible rather than vacillating, weak, or opportunistic. In response to histories that have focused on the apparent failure of the queen's repeated peace negotiations, this chapter places her activity in the context of scholarship on medieval violence and the rituals associated with its containment. Most important, the chapter attempts to extricate in more detail than has been offered in the past exactly what Isabeau's position on the Royal Council involved. The history of France during this period has been thoroughly and expertly treated. But Isabeau's role during this time been very little noted, and this the chapter aims to remedy.

Each of the next chapters revisits an issue or set of related issues particular to Isabeau's queenship that has been misrepresented somehow over the years. Chapter four, "Isabeau's Contemporary Reputation," makes the controversial, but, I believe, accurate claim that Isabeau was not badly viewed during her own time. It is taken for granted that Isabeau was disliked by her contemporaries. We read, for example, that "Isabeau of Bavaria's dreadful reputation was strongly reinforced by the chronicles. Since rumors against her were often floating around Paris, one cannot really fault a historian for recording them."[33] A number of studies of injurious language have included the queen as an example of powerful women damaged by *mala fama,* bad reputation, resulting from gossip.[34] Even Isabeau's champions routinely assume that her reputation suffered in 1405 because of her close political association with the king's brother, Louis of Orleans.[35] And yet, surprising as it may seem, criticism of the queen from her period is limited to two sources, both of which I have mentioned above. They are the chronicle of Michel Pintoin (which records four criticisms of the queen in the year 1405), and the scurrilous pamphlet the "Songe véritable," of about 1406, circulated by a Burgundian supporter.[36] It is no coincidence that in 1405 Jean sans Peur had just succeeded his father as Duke of Burgundy. One of his first acts was to come to Paris to solicit the royal funding that had ceased abruptly with his father's death. Jean's demands met with stubborn resistance by the Royal Council. What could have been more natural than for the duke to send his

men to claim to a chronicler that Louis of Orleans and Isabeau were mismanaging the realm to justify his demand for royal funds? Neither source, I argue, can be regarded as a reflection of a widespread dislike of the queen.

In chapter five, "Isabeau of Bavaria and the Cour amoureuse," I examine an example of the queen's self-representation as arbitrator, that is, her involvement in the poetic society known as the Cour amoureuse. None of the rare recent scholarship on the institution mentions Isabeau. And yet, she was central to its foundation. Created in the beginning years of what was shaping up to be a catastrophic feud, this "love court," in which love poetry written by the male members was judged by the female members, must have been intended as a means of articulating and ordering the passions that eventually led to violence, as a means of symbolically dramatizing and working out tensions. Typically, Isabeau can be found both at the center and on the margins of political activity. Her role in the institution was essential—ladies are the judges—and yet she was excluded from membership—only men could compete. Thus the Cour amoureuse can be seen as an emblem for the position of women in fifteenth-century French society and for the mediator queen, and as a forum for Isabeau to present a positive image of herself as arbitrator.

Chapter six, "Reinterpreting the *Enlèvement du dauphin,*" revisits the episode from the queen's life that elicited the well-known intervention of Christine de Pizan, "Une Epistre a la Royne de France" ("An Epistle to the Queen of France"), to consider how the queen managed one dangerous situation. This 1405 episode, a struggle for physical possession of the dauphin Louis, was set in motion when Jean sans Peur, attempting to rally the Parisians to support a coup of the government, chased down and returned the dauphin to Paris, after Isabeau had summoned the boy to her side. Specialists in Christine de Pizan, influenced by the scholarship of Léon Mirot, who adopts the Duke of Burgundy's version of the event, treat the queen as indifferent to the cause of peace and motivated by greed and her attachment to Louis of Orleans.[37] In contrast, I argue that Isabeau's actions throughout the episode represent a strategy to restore the peace, itself part of her larger strategy to keep the Valois monarchy intact. I conclude by considering how certain of Christine's writings, including "An Epistle," are intended to rally support behind the queen by helping to reinforce her image as mediator.

Chapter seven, "Revisiting the Treaty of Troyes," reexamines the events surrounding the notorious document. Perhaps more than any other event in the queen's life, the Treaty of Troyes of 1420 demands consideration; the most important recent study devoted to Isabeau, Gibbons' dissertation, ends

in 1417. Isabeau has long been reviled for her part in the treaty, which she is assumed by many to have signed "sous l'empire de la vengeance et de la peur" (under the regime of vengeance and fear) and which "consacra la déchéance de la monarchie, la ruine de la France et son propre déshonneur" (assured the fall of the monarchy, the ruin of France, and her own dishonor).[38] And yet, Pintoin, certainly no fan of the English occupation, notes the joy with which Parisians welcomed news of the accord.[39] Indeed, the Treaty of Troyes has been seen by some recent historians as a triumph for the French and a disaster for the English.[40] In this chapter, I argue that Isabeau's signing of the treaty should not be seen as an unpatriotic act but as a reasonable attempt at a solution to the war. Those who opposed the treaty were not French patriots or idealists refusing collaboration with the enemy. Rather, they were bound by kinship, marriage, or feudal obligation to the Armagnac faction, a faction to which the dauphin Charles adhered only by chance (although married to Marie of Anjou, whose family staunchly supported the Armagnacs, he had earlier been scheduled to marry Anne of Burgundy) and which had itself been discredited thoroughly by its suppression of the Parisians when it gained power after the Cabochian revolt.[41]

Finally, in a concluding chapter, "Wife, Mother, Friend," I emphasize the attractive traits that emerge from the contemporary sources on Isabeau: her devotion to her husband and his to her, her intense interest in her children, her piety, her interest in literature, and her aptitude for negotiation. I also challenge the perception that her household was perceived as corrupt by her contemporaries. Once again, the point is not to whitewash the queen but to examine the evidence through an optic more appropriate than those applied in the past. Although it is impossible to recapture the personality of a woman who lived six hundred years ago, certain characteristics emerge clearly enough from the sources to offer an occasional glimpse of the queen in her different roles.

I would like to be precise about the goals of this study. It adds no previously undiscovered sources to the story of Isabeau. The documents related to her life have been studied and many of them edited.[42] But although most of my material has been exploited in earlier studies, when refracted through the prism of Isabeau as a mediator queen, it yields a new story. Isabeau has often fared badly at the hands of historians who slot her story into old misogynistic paradigms and equally badly at the hands of literary specialists who insert her into feminist critical narratives without sufficient allowance for her historical situation. I try to correct the problems that arise from each of the ap-

proaches, while culling the advantages of both. That is to say, I reread the historical documents associated with Isabeau from the perspective that Gabrielle Spiegel has referred to as the "middle ground," a critical position based upon both "a belief in the referential, constative possibilities of language," the belief that documents do speak of actual events, and a "theoretically informed appreciation of the literary nature of all historical documents and their mediating and supplementary role in all historiography."[43] As will be clear now, the study is as much interested in the creation of the queen's legend as in the reality behind the legend, as much interested in how inadequate critical frameworks have distorted our understanding of her strategies as in the strategies themselves, and as much interested in how to reread the primary sources related to medieval queens as in the information about Isabeau to be gleaned from those sources.

Moreover, this study is not a traditional biography, and it makes no claim to be comprehensive; on the contrary, it seeks to draw attention to aspects of the queen's life that could be developed in further studies. If the Isabeau who emerges from my rereading is regarded by readers as a figure ready for insertion into the canon of active queens, as a figure worthy of further attention, the study will have achieved its goal. For despite her notoriety, Isabeau has received very little scholarly attention among scholars writing in English. To Famiglietti, she represents only a minor interest in his broader study of the period, and he therefore leaves much to be said about her. Although the publication in monograph form of Gibbons' dissertation—the only English book-length study of the queen—is eagerly awaited for its detailed analysis of the queen's financial accounts, at the moment this research is difficult to access. Colleen M. Mooney's 1977 doctoral dissertation on fifteenth-century queens offers important information on Isabeau's household, but the study is marred by its uncritical acceptance of the queen's black legend. Much work on the queen remains to be carried out. All the data for a prosopographical study of her household exists, for example. As a powerful woman in medieval French society, she offers a compelling case study. Given her position as one in a long line of female regents extending into the seventeenth century, her queenship offers a potential starting point for further study of regency. The lessons of Isabeau's vilification and the process of her restoration are important—one might even say exemplary—for the study of medieval and early modern queenship. Isabeau, a "well-behaved woman," should not have made history, to borrow the expression of Lauren Thatcher Ulrich. Indeed, her black legend is so disproportionate to the story that

emerges from contemporary documents that her biography and afterlife must serve as warnings not to accept "common knowledge" about historical figures uncritically. Isabeau's story reminds us of our obligation to approach queenship from a skeptical perspective, refusing to read accusations of fickleness, greed, and ambition at face value.

A note about translations: Except where noted, the translations of poetry and prose are my own. As for names, it is impossible to be entirely consistent when translating medieval French names. Certain of the names that figure in this study are routinely left in French by English-speaking scholars (for example Isabeau rather than Elizabeth, Louis rather than Lewis). Others, like Joan of Arc, are generally translated into English. I follow convention for these names. Certain names, like Jean and Philippe, are translated sometimes. In these cases, I have chosen to leave Jean to avoid what seems to me the greater inconsistency of John the Fearless alongside of Jean de Montaigu and Jean Gerson, neither of which is ever translated into English. Philippe, however, I have converted to English. I translate "of" in names when the reference is to a territory (Louis of Orleans, Jean of Berry), but leave "de" in cases of what had become family names by the late fourteenth century, although they may have referred to geographic locations earlier (Christine de Pizan, Bureau de la Rivière).

The Life and Afterlife of Isabeau of Bavaria

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CHAPTER ONE

Isabeau of Bavaria

Her Life

> Feuding was integral to the conduct of politics in early modern France because it was one of the key forms of competition for power, a mechanism by which the struggle for dominance was played out.

Because the career of Isabeau of Bavaria is not well known, I begin this study by recounting the most important events of her life. No narrative is unbiased, of course. What I attempt to offer, however, is one that conforms to the information available in contemporary sources. As we have seen, Isabeau continues to suffer from a negative reputation in modern histories, although her promiscuity has been shown to be a myth. Also, a general perception exists that she lacked political acumen. However, in this chapter I suggest that the queen's political activity makes sense within the context of a feuding society. Feuding and what recently has been called "integrative factionalism"—that is, the tendency of the nobility to attach their local quarrels to a central dispute, in this case, that between the Orleanists (followers of Louis of Orleans, later called the Armagnacs after the father-in-law of Louis's son Charles), and the Burgundians (followers of the Duke of Burgundy and his allies)—were central features of fifteenth-century government. Isabeau's vacillation between factions and her fruitless peace interventions have long been regarded as evidence of her political clumsiness. But the behavior of those involved in feuds, either as members of factions and or mediators, has been carefully studied and "vacillation" has been shown to be normal; moreover, peace agreements tended to be of short duration.[1] Even when mediators were people of great political clout or moral authority, their power to enforce the agreements that they helped to effect between factions was limited.

In addition to introducing an Isabeau free of her black legend, this survey of the queen's life is intended to provide a foundation on which to build the more detailed analyses that I propose in the book's later chapters. In this

chapter, I discuss how the Bavarian princess came to be queen at the most renowned of all the courts of Europe at the age of fourteen, entering into a political situation that was already complicated. I then outline four distinct phases of her political career as I see them.[2] The figure that emerges in this chapter is significantly different from the one made popular by the black legend: a respected queen, she is asked to preserve the monarchy from the incursions of the king's powerful male relatives, and she diligently and competently executes the tasks assigned her. But, as this introduction will demonstrate, Isabeau was the unluckiest of women. Had any one of a number of key events turned out in her favor, her reputation today would be very different.

Elisabeth von Wittelsbach

Elisabeth von Wittelsbach, as Isabeau was known in her native Bavaria (Isabeau and Isabel are French forms of the name Elisabeth), was probably born in 1370, daughter of Stephen III, who was Duke of Bavaria from 1375 to 1413.[3] Although the Bavaria-Ingolstadt branch was not the most important of the Wittelsbach family, Isabeau's ancestry was nevertheless illustrious: her father descended from the Merovingians and also from Charlemagne via his ancestor Arnulf the Bad, elected first Duke of Bavaria in 911. Her mother, Taddea Visconti, was the daughter of the Milanese Bernabo Visconti, who with his brother, Galeazzo II, and, later, his nephew, Giangaleazzo, ruled over the cities of Lombardy. Some bits of evidence from later in her life hint that her immediate family ties were strong. Regarding Isabeau's mother, who died when the girl was eleven, nothing concrete is known, but during a trip to Paris in the fall of 1399 intended to gather French support for Ruprecht, Wittelsbach candidate for Holy Roman Emperor, Duke Stephen is recorded as having spent September 28 with Isabeau in masses for Taddea, whose death they commemorated in the same way each year.[4] Isabeau's relationship with her only brother, Louis of Bavaria (ca. 1368–1447), seems to have been especially close. From the time of his first visit to the French royal court in 1391, the queen did everything possible to promote his career there, making him a central figure in the royal entourage and arranging advantageous marriages for him with two eligible French widows. As for her relationship with her father, the evidence is scarce, but some traces remain. For example, the duke is recorded as having sent a minstrel for her amusement in the early years of her reign.[5] But the most touching sign of the affection in which

Stephen held his daughter is his apparent reluctance to allow her go to France to be viewed by Charles VI as a potential bride. As Froissart imagines the situation, Stephen "pensa moult longuement sus" (thought long about it), before making his decision about whether to permit her to undertake the journey. He then announced that

> Il est moult loing de chy, et si y a trop grant regard à faire une roine et femme d'un roy. Si seroie trop courouchiés, se on avoit mené en France ma fille, et puis elle me fust renvoye ; je ay assés plus chier que je le marie à mon aisse dalés moy.
> [It (the French kingdom) is very far from here, and the business of choosing a queen, wife of the king, is serious. I would be furious if my daughter were sent to France only to have her returned to me; she is so dear to me that I will marry her here, close to me, in my own time.][6]

Eventually, Stephen was won over by the Valois, but only after receiving promises that no one, including Isabeau, would be told of the real purpose for her visit to France. Apparently he was as worried that she would be crushed if she were refused as he was that such a rejection would make her less marriageable. Thus she was told that she was going on a pilgrimage to Amiens.

For the French, the Bavarian princess embodied first and foremost an alliance with the Empire against the English. The Hundred Years War had motivated both the English and the French to solicit the help of the Holy Roman Emperor, an office disputed by the rival houses of Wittelsbach and Luxembourg. The French had been longtime allies of the Luxembourg: Charles IV, Luxembourger Holy Roman Emperor from 1355 until his death in 1378, had been the maternal uncle of Charles V of France. However, Froissart claims that Charles V, disgruntled that the special bond between the French and the Luxembourgers had been disturbed by the engagement between Anne of Bohemia—daughter of Luxembourger emperor, Charles IV—and Richard II of England, requested on his deathbed that his son Charles VI marry a German princess.[7] According to Froissart, Charles V sought to insure that "des Alemans plus grans alliances se fesissent as François, car il veoit que lis rois d'Engletière estoit maries à le soeur dou roy d'Allemaigne" (the Germans would make greater alliances with the French, because he [Charles] saw that the king of England had married the sister of the king of Germany).[8] Still, the king had sought a Wittelsbach alliance against the English even before the engagement, for influence over Hainault-Holland was

coveted by both France and England because of that territory's role in the wool industry. But the union that the king negotiated between his daughter, Marie, and William, son of the Wittelsbacher Albert of Bavaria, regent of Hainault-Holland, came to nought when Marie, still a child, died in 1377.[9] Charles V tried again with an engagement between his daughter Catherine and Wittelsbacher Ruprecht of Bavaria, heir of the Elector Palatine of the Rhine. But for unknown reasons, this marriage did not materialize, either. Instead Catherine married Jean of Montpensier, son of another of the king's brothers, Jean of Berry, in 1386.[10] Although he did not live to see his son marry Isabeau of Bavaria, one assumes that Charles V would have regarded the union at least to some extent as the French response to that between Richard II and Anne of Bohemia.

Isabeau's Italian family connections were probably not a principal factor in her having been chosen as a bride in 1385. France had designs on Italy at that moment—primarily to force the abdication of the Roman pope, Urban VI, in favor of the French pope, Clement VII, whom Charles V had helped to install in Avignon, an abdication that would have facilitated France's claim to Naples-Sicily.[11] However, Isabeau's branch of the Visconti family had been pushed from power just months before her marriage, when Giangaleazzo, Lord of Milan and first cousin of the queen's mother, had arranged to have his coruler, the queen's grandfather, Bernabo, thrown in prison. Still imprisoned, Bernabo expired mysteriously soon afterward.[12] Thus the relatives of Bernabo Visconti were in no position to offer serious support to the French at the time of Isabeau's marriage. Still, her Italian relations are crucial for understanding her own political inclinations during the 1390s, the most marked of which was her opposition to any person or entity allied with Giangaleazzo. She appears to have done her best to foil the ambitious plan on which he embarked after doing away with Bernabo, of creating a single united kingdom in northern Italy. As we will see, during the early years of her reign, Isabeau favored the king's uncle Philip of Burgundy over the king's brother Louis of Orleans. Of interest in this regard is that Louis's wife, Valentina Visconti, was the daughter of Giangaleazzo. In 1361, Charles VI's grandfather, Jean le Bon, had helped pay his ransom to the English by giving his daughter, Isabelle, to Giangaleazzo's father, Galeazzo, in exchange for 600,000 florins. Galeazzo then married the girl to his son, a marriage that produced Valentina Visconti, married by her own father to Louis in 1389.[13] Isabeau's loyalty to her kin explains her early negative attitude toward the Duke of Orleans. But we shall see that Isabeau's alliance

shifted several times during the course of her life in response to political exigencies.

The Bavarian princess first came to the attention of the Valois in 1383.[14] In May of that year, Charles VI called for aid in a struggle against the English, rivals as we have seen for influence over cloth-producing Flanders, part of the immense territories of royal uncle Philip of Burgundy, effective ruler of France at the time.[15] In that month the English had landed in the port towns of Flanders from which area they marched menacingly inland. One of the foreign princes responding to Charles's call for aid was the brother of Stephen of Bavaria, Frederick. When Frederick demonstrated himself to be a firm ally, the French asked whether he might not have a daughter of an age to marry the king. He did not, but Stephen did, a pretty girl of thirteen or fourteen. The uncles of Charles VI suggested that the girl be brought before the king for an inspection. However, as we have seen, when Frederick reported the request to Stephen, the Duke of Bavaria was not at all eager to let his daughter undergo such an ordeal.

Yet, according to Froissart, the issue was not closed. Philip of Burgundy was particularly interested in Wittelsbach alliances. In 1385 he married two of his children to two children of the Wittelsbachs who ruled Hainaut-Holland. Another Wittelsbach alliance might marshal further resistance against expansion by the English into the continent. Jeanne, Duchess of Brabant in the Netherlands and Philip's aunt, revived the matter of an alliance with Stephen of Bavaria at the double marriage of Philip's children, for she was equally eager for another Wittelsbach alliance. Her husband had died in December 1383, leaving Philip of Burgundy as his heir. However, because the Duke of Brabant had left no son, Emperor Wenceslas was claiming that the duchy, a fief of the Empire, should revert to him. Jeanne strongly supported Philip's claim against the Emperor's and for this reason was happy to press for further alliances with the Wittelsbachs.[16] As Froissart recounts, when she resurrected the matter at the wedding, Philip reminded her that there had been no news from Stephen. But she assured him that she would get through to Frederick to see what could be done. She seems to have been successful in her request, for finally it was agreed that Frederick would accompany Isabeau along with the girl's nurse and her childhood friend, Catherine de Fastavarin (Catherine l'Alemande as she is sometimes called in Isabeau's accounts), on the simulated pilgrimage to St. Jean of Amiens. Froissart reports that the king fell in love at first sight, and the two were married within days of their initial encounter, on July 17, 1385.

Isabeau's marriage continued a policy already instigated under Charles V, but, more significantly in 1385, it represented a piece in a game being played by Philip of Burgundy seeking to advance his own agenda. From the very beginning, then, Isabeau was part of a contest between the duke and anyone who would oppose his plans to expand his empire. Given the general compatibility between the interests of her family and those of Philip, she began her career at the French court on Philip's side. Still, as will be clear, she always put the interests of her family first.

Isabeau's First Political Phase

Isabeau quickly entered into political life at court. Giangaleazzo's murder of Bernabo had caused a crisis; both Visconti branches looked to France for backing.[17] Giangaleazzo perceived Isabeau as a threat to his plans for expansion and sought to establish his own power base in France by marrying his daughter Valentina to the Duke of Orleans in 1389. Louis's marriage to Valentina had brought him the county of Asti, and it raised the possibility of a kingdom of his own, to be created of papal fiefs in central Italy and supported by Giangaleazzo as a sort of buffer for his own lands.[18] Soon after the marriage, Avignon pope Clement VII sent Louis a bull naming him *vicaire de l'Eglise* in Rimini, Pesaro, Bertinoro, Fossombrone, Faenza, Imola, and Forli.[19] All he had to do was conquer these cities. In addition to the support of his son-in-law, Giangaleazzo enjoyed that of the Duke of Burgundy, who had borrowed money from him and employed his favorite counselor, Antonio Porro, for a pension of 600 francs a year as of 1383.[20] Also, for the moment, Philip concurred with Giangaleazzo in supporting Clement VII in the ongoing Papal Schism.[21] Clement VII had awarded Valentina and Louis, first cousins, the dispensation they needed to marry, and, for his part, Giangaleazzo was happy to participate in plans for a French expedition to invade Italy and oust the Roman pope, Boniface IX.[22] Although in 1395, the French court, with the exception of Louis, would take up the *via cessionis,* demanding the abdication of both popes, Philip initially participated in plans for the French expedition to Italy.

As for the anti-Giangaleazzo faction, besides Isabeau, it included the Armagnac count Jean III, brother-in-law through his sister Beatrice to the son of the murdered Bernabo, Carlo Visconti.[23] David Bueno de Mesquita explains that when Carlo fled after his father's murder, taking refuge at the court of Duke Stephen of Bavaria, among other places, "his wife Beatrice of

Armagnac returned to her home in Languedoc to rouse her brothers against the usurper."[24] But at the court in Paris, Isabeau had little support in her opposition to the Lord of Milan until her brother arrived in Paris in late 1391 with a contingent of Bavarian followers, in the first of what would be four extended stays at the French court.[25] Giangaleazzo's star had ascended. In 1389, the city of Florence, threatened by Giangaleazzo's defeat of Verona and Padua, made plans to send an envoy to Charles requesting help. In addition to requesting military aid from Jean III of Armagnac, the envoy was instructed to persuade the queen to intervene with her husband, requesting his aid in staving off the Lord of Milan's advances.[26] After all, the Duke of Bavaria was a Florentine ally.[27] But according to Bueno de Mesquita, this envoy may never have departed for Paris at all: with Valentina just about to arrive in Paris, the time was not right.[28] Moreover, the Florentines had little to offer the French, compared with their Milanese rival. They were neutral regarding the Schism, and, although they offered to turn over to the French any land that they might confiscate from Giangaleazzo, the possibility was too tenuous to tempt Charles VI.[29] A treaty between Paris and Milan was signed in 1391.[30]

Still, the Florentine's interest in co-opting the queen indicates her perceived influence, and, although she was not able to impose her will early on, the political constellation at court changed in the mid-1390s. The plan to invade Italy to overthrow the Roman pope, supported by both Philip and Louis, was not realized, postponed to a later date when Charles decided to pursue peace with the pro-Roman English.[31] The kingdom created out of the Papal States for Louis likewise came to nothing. In 1394 the Avignon pope died, which promised to bring an end to the Schism. However, the French cardinals in Avignon elected another pope, Benedict XIII. Irate at this missed opportunity to unify the Church, Charles VI decided to withdraw obedience. This decision in turn modified France's Italian policy, which had depended on Giangaleazzo's support of the Avignon pope. Moreover, in 1395, the Genoese offered Charles VI sovereignty over the city, further diminishing French dependence upon Giangaleazzo.[32] The Lord of Milan abandoned all hope of an alliance with the French by the end of 1395, opening up new alliances with Holy Roman Emperor Wenceslaus and Boniface IX.[33] Anger against Giangaleazzo turned on Valentina, who was obligated to leave the French court sometime before April 1396, chased out by accusations that she had been bewitching the king.[34] Charles's fury at Giangaleazzo's supposed betrayal manifested itself in an outburst recorded by Pintoin. At a dinner with Richard

II during the celebrations for the 1396 wedding between the King of England and Charles and Isabeau's daughter, Isabella, Charles caught sight of a herald bearing Giangaleazzo's arms. Outraged, he had the arms torn from the herald and chased him from the court, threatening to throw him in prison if he ever returned.[35] In this new atmosphere Isabeau initiated negotiations with the Florentine ambassador, Buonaccorso Pitti. As Pitti reports in his memoir, the queen summoned him in May 1396, begging him to persuade the Commune of Florence to send ambassadors to the King of France to request an alliance against Giangaleazzo. On September 29, 1396, an alliance was signed between France and Florence against Milan.[36]

Besides the Florentines, the pope recognized Isabeau's importance as a mediator. In 1389, Clement VII ceded a large number of benefices to Charles, sixty of which were to be carried out in the name of Isabeau.[37] The pope was correct in his assessment of her interest in the issue. After the death of Clement VII in 1394, the queen joined the Princes of the Blood, the Royal Council, and the University of Paris at a council on the Schism held in Paris in 1395, at which the French decided that both popes should be forced to abdicate.[38] The messages that she sent to the king and princes while they were attending a summit at Rheims to discuss the Schism (except in cases specifically noted, Isabeau's messages no longer exist, only records of payments to messengers) further testify her investment in the problem.[39]

Another political problem in which the queen was involved was the struggle over the imperial crown. Isabeau's great-grandfather, Louis of Bavaria (1282–1347), had been Holy Roman Emperor, although just before his death he lost the office to his Luxembourger rival, Charles IV (1316–78). Charles IV was followed by his son, Wenceslas, who was voted out of office in 1400 because of his drunkenness and his perceived passivity in politics, including his lack of action regarding the Schism. The electors then chose the Wittelsbach Ruprecht of Bavaria in 1400. Regarding the conflict brought on by Wenceslas's deposition, Charles VI urged arbitration; Philip, partial to Bavaria, was happy with the decision, while Louis, ally of Wenceslas, was not.[40] Isabeau was instrumental in gathering French support for Ruprecht, and she kept in close contact with him after his election, promoting his causes at court.[41]

Stuart Carroll writes that both authority and charisma were important qualities in a mediator and that "some individuals possessed both qualities."[42] This seems to have been the case with Isabeau. Queens bore a particular authority by virtue of their anointment during their coronation. Although they

possessed no juridical authority, they were nonetheless royal.[43] But besides her authority as queen, Isabeau appears to have been charismatic. Detailed evidence is hard to come by, but a few traces of her aptitude for politics remain from this period: of her ability judiciously to send the signals she wanted and of the conciliatory manner that would have made her a good mediator. Most important, she appears to have managed tricky relationships well. For example, although generally the ally of Philip of Burgundy, she maintained close relationships with that duke's political opponents, the marmousets. This term, usually meaning a type of monkey or a grotesque that decorates a building, came to signify a minion and was used derisively to refer to Charles V's close advisors, whom Philip had chased from power at that king's death. Isabeau was close to the wife of marmouset Bureau de la Rivière who served her as a *dame d'honneur* when Charles VI asserted control of his own government in 1388 and brought the marmousets back into power. Records of letters sent verify that Isabeau maintained the relationship even after Philip once again ejected the marmousets in 1392 and forced their wives from her household; the many letters she wrote to marmouset Olivier de Clisson, only one of the group to have remained in power after the death of Charles V and constable for Charles VI, suggests that she maintained good relations with him as well.[44] While she sent over forty letters to Philip between 1398 and 1402, she also sent many to Louis of Orleans, even though, as we have seen, her politics were contrary to his on important counts.[45] Her accounts show that in September 1395, she sent four black velvet hats lined with satin to the Emperor Wenceslas, although she did not support the Luxembourgs.[46] In May of 1401 she received with great honor William, Duke of Guelders, ally of Wenceslas and Louis of Orleans and enemy of Philip of Burgundy. Thibault describes how she entertained him in her own hotel, the Hôtel Barbette. There she offered him a magnificent supper, preceded by a steam bath in her own *étuves,* the walls of which were hung with fine linen from Rheims, decorated with roses and flowers of all variety. Afterward, she had him perfumed with essences from the Orient that she had imported every year from Damas.[47] We also find her negotiating in secret with an ambassador in favor of her enemy Giangaleazzo: in a letter of Charles VI to the Duke of Milan, she is described as willing to press for a marriage between a daughter of France and his son.[48] Although Louis of Orleans was not yet her ally in 1402–3, she lent him 20,000 francs, of which he returned 11,000 on February 1, 1403.[49]

Further evidence of her political acumen is the fact that her help was

sought in mediating the conflict between Philip and Louis during the final years of the fourteenth and the first years of the fifteenth century. In November 1388, Charles VI, then twenty, asserted his right to rule on his own and told his uncles that he would no longer require their presence on his Royal Council. The move, several years in the making, had been hastened by the arrest of the king's beloved marmouset Olivier de Clisson. In June 1387, Olivier was captured by the Duke of Brittany, ally of the royal uncles, and held in chains. This act outraged the king and weakened the uncles' position at court. Indeed, Olivier told an emissary from the duke of Lancaster that he had made Charles VI "king and lord in his [own] kingdom and removed him from the government and hands of his uncles."[50]

Charles proclaimed his independence from his uncles on the return trip from a military expedition of September 1388 to subdue William of Guelders, who had been harassing Brabant. William submitted in November, and the French troops headed home. But in Rheims, they stopped. As John Bell Henneman describes the scene: "There, in the royal coronation city, the king held a meeting of his council, probably according to some plan, since there was no obvious reason for convening the council before reaching Paris. At this council, the cardinal of Laon, [marmouset] Pierre Aycelin de Montagu, made a short speech expressing the view that the king had reached the age when he longer had any need of tutors and should take over direction of affairs himself."[51] Henneman seconds the argument of Françoise Autrand that the coup can be seen as one episode in a long-term "father-son" style dispute, although in this case the dispute was between uncle and son: "friction between the king and his older son was a pervasive characteristic of the Valois monarchy in France."[52]

The most significant of the changes resulting from the young king's assertion of power was that it laid the groundwork for the ascendance of his brother, Louis of Orleans, who from that point on became Charles VI's closest advisor. This is to say that Charles VI's action facilitated the feud later known as the Armagnac-Burgundian war, "arguably the most serious feud in later medieval Europe, which dominated the political scene in France for over forty years."[53] This prolonged conflict spanned generations, and included the assassination of Louis by Philip's son, Jean sans Peur, to which the Orleanists responded twelve years later with the revenge killing of Jean. The feud, which made possible Henry V's invasion and occupation of France, was so destructive that by the middle of the fifteenth century the long-cherished right of the nobility to wage wars was challenged, and "the principle

that only sovereign law could make hostile acts legitimate" was widely accepted if not widely applied.[54] During the period in question, however, for the nobility the right to wage war to defend their interests was self-evident, if not approved by the king of France. Even Christine de Pizan, tireless promoter of peace, granted that princes possessed the right to make war on each other. For example, in the *Livre des fais d'armes et de chevalerie* she notes that "wars and battles by right must not be maintained or judged *except by earthly princes who hold their lands from no one except God, as emperors, kings, dukes, and others who are called lord*" (my emphasis).[55] This category necessarily included the dukes of Orleans and Burgundy.[56] Indeed, according to Christine, waging war is one of the primary duties of princes, as she writes in the *Livre du corps de policie* (ca. 1407).[57] Whether Charles VI's insanity, which severely diminished his ability to broker peace between the quarreling dukes, was responsible for the feud, or whether it was the inevitable outcome of a process of political factionalization that had been occurring throughout the fourteenth century is a matter of dispute.[58]

But whatever its cause, the feud was left to Isabeau to manage, a task which would have required a far greater mechanism of enforcement than she or anyone in the kingdom could have mustered. The rivals were a formidable pair. When Charles V had died leaving an heir of twelve years of age, Philip of Burgundy had succeeded in stripping his brother Louis of Anjou of the regency of the realm bestowed on him by the king, who had specifically separated regency from *tutelle,* or guardianship of the royal children.[59] This Charles V had assigned his younger brothers, Jean of Berry and Philip, his wife's brother, Louis of Bourbon, and a council that included his most trusted counselor, Bureau de la Rivière. Bureau de la Rivière also occupied a central position in the regency set out by Charles V; he possessed veto power, so to speak, over regent Louis of Anjou.[60] In spite, or, more likely, because of Charles V's high regard for Bureau de la Rivière, Philip chased him from power along with Charles V's other most valued counselors, the marmousets, after the king's death. Along with Jean of Berry and Louis of Bourbon, Philip had the young king crowned to obviate the need for Louis of Anjou's regency: Charles VI would rule with help of his uncles. Louis of Anjou soon headed off to Naples to take possession of the throne he had been ceded by Jeanne of Naples, who died in Bari in 1384. Jean of Berry headed south to administer the Languedoc region of France.

Although Philip would later strike the pose of reformer of finances in his struggle to gain the upper hand over Louis, the first years of his effective re-

gency for the young king were troubled by revolts over the taxes he imposed. The royal uncles faced a serious financial problem after the death of Charles V, for on his deathbed, the king had cancelled the *fouage,* the hearth tax, which accounted for about 30 percent of the kingdom's total tax revenue.[61] The kingdom quite simply could not continue to function as it had under Charles V in the face of such a reduction. But reestablishing taxes only enflamed a difficult situation: revolts had already begun before the king's death, breaking out in 1378.[62] Nonetheless, shortly after the king's death, the uncles convened the Estates General in November 1380, to request new taxes. Intensified uprising ensued, first in the southern towns of Puy and Montpellier.[63] In 1382, Paris, Rouen, Amiens, Orleans, Rheims, and a number of Flemish cities revolted, as well. The Parisian Maillotins initially won concessions. But their victory was short-lived. The commune of Rouen was dismantled, while the revolt in Flanders was put down by the victory of a combination of French royal forces and those of Louis of Malle in the battle of Roosebeke on November 27, 1382. With the northern insurgents defeated, the royal troops returned to Paris where the leaders of the revolt were executed and the city's privileges were revoked.

That difficulty surmounted, Philip went on to reign until Charles dismissed him and Jean of Berry. Along with the uncles' dismissal, the king made a number of other changes. He reinstalled the marmousets in positions of financial responsibility. Jean de Montaigu returned to head the hotel of the king. Jean de Montaigu's brother, also named Jean, headed the Chambre de comptes. The marmousets created the Cour des aides in 1390 and dominated it.[64] Another change, as André Demurger explains, was the naming of new *baillis* and *sénéchaux,* local officers upon whom royal power depended for its diffusion.[65] Also, from their positions of power, the marmousets began to effect changes that threatened Philip with their potential to restructure access to royal funds. Aiming to tighten administration of the realm, they tried to attach pensions to offices to create a body of *fonctionnaires*.[66] Another change was that although the marmousets retained *aides* on consumption and the *gabelle,* they abolished the *taille,* a direct tax created by the uncles in 1384. Between September 1388 and February 1389, they scrutinized Duke Jean of Berry's administration of the Languedoc. The result of this examination was that the duke's officers were suspended, his henchman, Jean Bétisac, was sent to the fire for heresy and sodomy, and Berry was relieved of his post. When the uncles' power began to diminish, that of the king's brother, Louis, began to rise. According to Demurger, the marmousets "comptent sur

des princes d'un type nouveau, soucieux avant tout du service de l'Etat: le jeune duc d'Orléans ou l'oncle maternel du roi, Louis de Bourbon, ce prince 'officier de carrière' dont on fait volontiers un modèle" (counted on princes of a new type, concerned above all for service to the State : the young Duke of Orleans or the maternal uncle of the king, Louis of Bourbon, this career-officer prince, of whom a model was willingly made).[67]

However, their activity was interrupted in August 1392, when Charles suffered his first known episode of the insanity that would plague him for the duration of life. The episode occurred en route to Brittany, toward which Charles was leading an army to avenge Clisson, this time victim of a failed murder attempt at the hands of Pierre de Craon, who had been exiled from court a year earlier by Louis of Orleans. Craon had fled to safety in Brittany, where he was protected by the duchy's leader, Jean. The malady's onset had been preceded by feverishness and incoherence, according to contemporaries, but nothing could have prepared anyone for the catastrophe that would follow. As Charles and his men made their way through the woods, an insane man charged the king's horse, clutching the bridle. "Ride no further, noble king!" he is reputed to have yelled. "You are betrayed!" The king's men shoved the man aside, but he followed, repeating his warning. The group burst out of the forest at about noon. Suddenly a page dropped Charles's lance. The sound of the lance clanking against a steel helmet roused the king to a bizarrely violent action. Drawing his sword, he shouted and attacked, killing some of his knights and fighting crazily until his men gained control of him.

Although the king recovered his senses within a few days, inspiring hope that the incident would be isolated, this was not to be. The incident gave Philip his opportunity to take his vengeance upon the marmousets, dislodging them a second time from Charles's administration. Fearing for their lives, they fled.[68] With the help of the Duke of Berry, Philip reestablished himself as the head of the government, denying any role to Louis, who was now twenty years old.[69] When Charles emerged from his first episode, he seemed to have forgotten his earlier rebellion against the rule of his uncles and demonstrated only gratitude for their aid. Or, in any case, he did nothing further to curtail their access to power but left Philip and Louis free to pursue their rivalry, which manifested itself about 1398 when Louis began to pose a clear threat to his uncle.[70] To arrive at this point, the Duke of Orleans constructed a checkered empire to counter Philip's Burgundian territories. His strategy, Demurger writes, was less to create a hegemony in the king-

dom than to spread his power throughout, as moves like the 1402 acquisition of rights over Luxembourg, smack in the middle of Philip's holdings, suggest.[71] He had received in appanage the duchy of Orleans in June 1392 and the county of Valois in 1393; earlier he had purchased the counties of Blois and the Dunois. The king then awarded him the counties of Angoulême, Périgord, and Dreux. At the same time he bought Champagne, Luzarches, Fère en Tardenois, Château-Thierry, and the counties of Porcien and Soisson, as well as the seigneury of Coucy.[72]

Eventually the dukes would disagree on all the major issues of the day. On the question of the papal schism, Philip, after initially supporting the pope of Avignon, came to promote subtraction of loyalty from both popes, while Louis consistently favored the pope residing in Avignon, first Clement VII and then Benedict XIII.[73] As for relations with England, Philip was ever eager to maintain the peace so that his northern territories would prosper, whereas Louis showed himself belligerent. Regarding their stance toward the Holy Roman Empire, in the contested deposition of the Luxembourger Wenceslas in favor of the Wittelsbach Ruprecht, Philip of course favored the Wittlesbachs, while Louis favored Wenceslas, his ally in his ambitions for expansion into the empire. Yet another important difference between the men lay in their conception of how the realm should be governed. Louis supported the program of the marmousets, which Autrand has described as emphasising two main things: "l'efficacité et la centralisation." Furthermore, personnel would be chosen for their competence and carefully surveyed.[74] For Philip, in contrast, a corps of *fonctionnaires* threatened the traditional privileges of princes. He in turn would play the reformer, taking up the call against the taxes that Louis raised to wage war against England. Already popular with the Parisians, who saw him as a natural ally because their economy required that they maintain good relations with Flanders, Philip further cultivated their favor by protesting Louis's taxes.

This was the situation that Isabeau was called on to manage and that would become the primary focus of what I am calling her second political phase, during which her role was defined by royal ordinance. In the Empire, Louis began to gain influence, threatening Philip by acquiring Adolf of Cleves and Charles II of Lorraine through fief-rents in 1398. In addition, between 1401 and 1403, he collected a dozen vassals, including Edward of Bar, from the Rhineland and Lorraine. In the east and the north, he surrounded Philip's duchy of Brabant-Limbourg with his allies.[75] Most threatening to Philip was Louis's 1401 acquisition of William Duke of Guelders, constantly at war

with Jeanne, Duchess of Brabant, whose territory, as we have noted, Philip was set to inherit. Philip had interceded at different times on her behalf and had acquired rights over her duchy in 1390 as a form of repayment for this service; he also defended the duchy in a war of 1397–99.[76] Another bone of contention between Louis and Philip was the duchy of Luxembourg over which Louis gained rights in 1402 from Jost Marquis of Moravia, after a long process of negotiation. Jost had earlier awarded the same to Philip, but when the Marquis of Moravia needed to aid his cousin Emperor Wenceslas, he turned to Wenceslas's ally, Louis of Orleans.[77]

To fund this real-life game of Risk, the dukes struggled to control the kingdom's finances. They therefore attempted to stack the Royal Council with their men. The choice of loyal regional officers to supervise tax collection was another crucial element in their struggle, for once the uncles had returned to power with Charles's mental illness, they restored certain taxes abolished by the marmousets. Before the marmousets were ousted by the uncles in 1392, writes Henneman, they "had achieved important gains in the sphere of royal finance, reducing expenditures and avoiding the imposition of extraordinary *tailles*. The uncles had not immediately returned to the unpopular policies of the past, but the marriage of the king's daughter with a large dowry in 1396 justified a traditional feudal aid, and the crown imposed a *taille* for this purpose.[78] A year later, there was another *taille* for the "needs of Christendom."[79] The resumption of these extraordinary taxes increased the importance of the officials who administered the king's revenues from taxation, counselors-general of the aides, for actually collecting tax revenues from resisting parties was an enormously difficult job. Charles appointed four new counselors-general of the aides in 1399, and fourteen more over the next eight years. Eleven of these were Orleanists, or followers of the king's brother Louis of Orleans, while only four were Burgundians, or followers of Philip.[80]

The impending feud nearly broke out in earnest in 1401. With Philip absent from the kingdom for six months to pursue negotiations with Ruprecht, Louis took advantage of the situation to install his men: Guillaume de Tignonville was named provost of Paris and Charles d'Albret and Gontier Col were named counselors-general of the aides. Furious at being outmaneuvered, Philip protested in a letter of October 26 to Parlement that the realm was being mismanaged.[81] On December 7 he threatened violence, entering Paris with six hundred men at arms and sixty archers. The city waited nervously, fearing armed conflict. But bloodshed was avoided through rec-

onciliation. Philip's move can be seen as strategic. As Guy Halsall explains about feuding, the menace of violence is often used to "bring about arbitration and end the dispute."[82] The ploy worked: Isabeau was called upon to arbitrate. Writes Thibaut: "Le 6 janvier, la Reine, 'après avoir tant, sur ce, procédé,' obtint que, 'moiennant la grâce de Dieu et l'exhortation et admonestement d'aucunes bonnes personnes qui à ce ont labouré, les diz seigneurs se soient sousmis à l'arbitrage de la Reine et des Prince, et juré sur les Evangiles d'exécuter les conditions qu'on leur poserait." (On January 6, the queen, "after much negotiation," obtained that "through the grace of God and the exhortation and warning of several good people who had worked on it, that the said dukes submitted to the mediation of the queen and the princes, and swore on the gospels to execute the conditions that were imposed upon them.")[83] The document laying out the terms to which the parties finally agreed notes that Isabeau conducted "une grant meure déliberation avec les Princes" (a long, considered deliberation with the princes).[84] The negotiations were crowned with a ritualistic dinner.[85] The queen then held a *grand Conseil* on January 14.[86]

Isabeau's Second Political Phase

I have discussed the conflict facing Isabeau in detail, because it is important to emphasize its magnitude and complicated nature. This conflict resulted in Isabeau's entry into the government in a serious and sustained capacity, instigating a second phase in her political career. This phase can be dated, I suggest, from March 1402, when she received her first appointment as mediator by royal ordinance. But in addition to worry over the feud, Charles VI manifested in his ordinances a nervousness that one of the dukes, prevailing over the other, would go on to assume total control over him.[87] Thus he eventually transformed the mediator role for the queen laid out in his ordinances into one of protector of his throne.

Initially, Charles responded to threats from his male relatives by attempting to lessen the possibility that any one individual could ever amass sufficient power to impose a form of *tutelle* upon him or his heir, in the case of his death. His earliest strategy, following his father, had been to distribute power between a council of tutors and a regent, who would act as checks on each other, in the event of his death.[88] In January 1393, he had named Isabeau coguardian of the dauphin, Louis, Duke of Guyenne, and the other royal children. She would share the task with the Dukes of Burgundy, Berry, Bourbon,

and her brother, Louis of Bavaria.[89] At the same time, in a second ordinance he had awarded regency to Louis of Orleans, in the event that he should die before the dauphin reached majority.[90] But the arrangement exacerbated the strife it was designed to calm, for Louis, claiming that his regency powers applied during the king's "absences," was constantly countered by Philip, who also considered himself the head of the government when the king was unable to function.

Charles then tried to resolve the power struggle by assigning Isabeau to arbitrate between the dukes. He did this first in an ordinance of March 1402.[91] In July of the same year, he augmented her authority with an ordinance that reauthorized her to mediate between his unruly relatives and furthermore authorized her to preside over the Royal Council during his periods of debility.[92] This theoretically imposed equality upon the two dukes as leading members of the Council, while installing Isabeau as impartial president over both. But the strife continued. In April 1403, Charles passed another ordinance, this one spelling out that all decisions during his absences were to be made by majority rule of the Royal Council.[93] Isabeau remained president of the Royal Council, but responsibility for decisions was now shared equally by all members. More significantly, the king dealt with his worry that a too-powerful regent would usurp the throne by abolishing the regency altogether. On the king's death, his oldest son, no matter what his age, would be crowned and assume the office of king without any regent. The absence of a regent in effect increased the potential role of the queen mother, as I discuss in chapter three.

Philip died in 1404. This should have spelled the end of conflict, for it left Louis the uncontested head of government during the king's "absences." The Duke of Berry seems always to have been content with his role on the Royal Council, and he therefore offered no competition.[94] But after a short lull, the new Duke of Burgundy, Philip's son Jean sans Peur, appeared on the scene to carry on the strife across the generations. He was determined to take up his father's position, because without the financial backing of the royal treasury, he could not maintain the empire that Philip had established.[95] Although the Duke of Burgundy was popular with the Parisians and, for a time, with the University of Paris, his demands were received as attempts at usurpation by Louis and the Royal Council, including Jean of Berry, and by Isabeau, as well.[96]

Son of King Jean le Bon and brother of King Charles V, Philip's rank was close to that of Louis, who was also the son of and brother to a king. Jean

sans Peur, in contrast, cousin of the king, was not entitled to a position on par with that of Louis.[97] True, his daughter Marguerite married the dauphin, Louis of Guyenne, in 1405. But Isabeau seems to have been apprehensive that Jean was overstepping his rank, for her reaction was to side with Louis to block the Duke of Burgundy's access to royal funds. In a treaty with the Duke of Burgundy that she signed the day before the double marriage of the dauphin to Jean's daughter, Marguerite, and the princess Michelle to Jean's son, Philip, she spelled out her own understanding of the relationship between Jean and the royal family. She would defend Jean only as far as permitted by the family hierarchy, where the interests of those more closely related to her than Jean (e.g., Louis) must precede Jean's.[98]

Jean continued to lobby for influence. To this end, he adopted Philip's strategy of demanding money from the royal treasury while publicly denouncing the mismanagement of government funds under Louis and calling for reform of the realm. An expansionist government can only survive by taxing its people to support its armies. But from the modern perspective that regards taxation not as a means of facilitating expansion but of redistributing the wealth for the common good, the government was indeed mismanaged. The issue of medieval taxation cannot be addressed adequately in this survey of Isabeau's career; the transformation of the French fiscal system between the mid-fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and the development of a regular system of taxation between 1435–45 have been dealt with by experts in the field.[99] Martin Wolfe notes that the notion of a happy relationship between taxation and wealth did not exist at all before the seventeenth century: "We know that medieval men (or, rather, medieval intellectuals) were able by the thirteenth century to conceive of a national state, of national as well as feudal taxing, and of a commonwealth that could be altered by man-made economic policies as well as by God and nature. However, they did not combine these elements into a concept of taxation as useful."[100] Perhaps the greatest obstacle to establishing a useful tax system was the exemption of the nobility: those who could least afford to pay supported the system. In the meantime, the Duke of Burgundy, like his father, took advantage of what was in fact a situation that could only have been ameliorated by a complete restructuring of the economy, encouraging public discontent over taxation by blaming the country's economic woes on Louis.

The strife between Louis and Jean narrowly missed breaking into open war in an episode of 1405 that has come to be known as the "kidnapping of the dauphin," which I discuss in detail in chapter six. After this, tensions

between the dukes mounted, culminating in the assassination of the Duke of Orleans by Jean's order in 1407. The royal family received news of the act with shock and horror. Pintoin announces that they "inconsolabiter sane dignum ducebant deflendum sic dedecorose necatum tam preclarum ducem (bewailed, inconsolable, the illustrious duke, so disgracefully slain).[101] Initially Jean attempted to hide his guilt, meeting with the royal relations at the Duke of Berry's Hôtel de Nesle. But asked whether he knew anything about the affair, he abruptly confessed and fled Paris, leaving his uncles stunned.[102] However, many of the Parisians supported Jean sans Peur, as they had his father, and now that he had revealed the lengths to which he would go to assert power, the threat that he would force *tutelle,* or guardianship, on the king loomed larger than ever. Thus the Royal Council attempted to manage rather than to confront him, seeking reconciliation between the houses of Burgundy and Orleans in hopes of avoiding further aggression on his part.

It was in this context of apprehension that the king reiterated the regency ordinance first promulgated in April 1403, abolishing regency again on December 26, 1407. This time the ordinance was published in a *lit de justice,* and, like its earlier counterpart, it proclaimed that from that point on royal heirs, no matter what their age, would immediately accede to the throne without the establishment of a regency:

> Senz ce que quelconque autre, tant soit prochain de leur linaige, entrepreigne, puisse, ne doye, ou lui loise entreprendre Bail, Regence, ou autre quelconque gouvernement & administracion dudit Royaume, ne que à nostredit & autres ainsnez Filz dessusdiz, puissent estre faiz, mis ou donnez en & sur leurdit droit à eulx deu par droit de nature, ne ès autres choses dessus touchées, empeschement & perturbacion quelconques, soubz umbre de ce que dit est, ne autrement, pour quelconques raisons, couleur, ou occasion que ce soit ou puist estre.
> [Without any other person, no matter how close their relationship, attempting or being able or being allowed to take over the guardianship, regency or any other type of government and administration of the said realm, nor the rights of our eldest son, his by nature, regarding any of the things said, be affected or subject to impediment or disturbance of any kind, for any reasons whatsoever.][103]

If the son is a minor, the ordinance stipulates that the realm will be administered "de leur auctorité & en leur nom" (by their authority and in their name) by

> les bons adviz, deliberacion & conseil des Roynes leurs mere, se elles vivoient, & des plus prouchains du Linage & Sang royal qui lors seroient; & aussi par les adviz, deliberacion, & conseil des Connestable & Chancellier de France, & des saiges hommes du Conseil.
> [the good advice, deliberation and counsel of the queens, their mother, if they are living, and by the next of lineage and blood royal if there be any and also by the advice, deliberation and counsel of the constable and chancellor of France and the wise men of the Council.][104]

The ordinance was intended to establish precedent for future generations, for it speaks in general terms, including no names to link it to the situation at hand. A second ordinance, now lost, must have been more specifically connected to the problem addressed by the first ordinance. In this, the dauphin, just eleven years old, was given power to rule as regent when the king was ill.[105]

The practical effect of the ordinance of 1403, reiterated in 1407, was to install the queen as coregent. When "absent," the king would not be *replaced* by a powerful regent, acting in his own interests. Rather, he would be represented by his coregent, acting in his name. The ordinance of 1403 stipulates that no decision will be final until he is informed of it, when he regains his senses and affirms the decision with his seal.[106] The need to repeat the abolition of regency just after Louis's assassination within the setting of a *lit de justice* suggests that the royal family felt menaced by the regency-seeking Jean. Still, it appears that they had no wish to antagonize him. The king allotted him a pension of 36,000 francs, while Isabeau sent him an *étrenne,* a New Year's gift.[107] To further appease him, reforms were imposed by royal ordinance on January 7, 1408, in response to his calls.[108] Referred to as an "ordonnance sur le nombre, les fonctions & les gages des Officiers de Justice & des Finances" (ordinance on the number, functions, and wages of the officers of justice and finances), the reform ordinance aimed to cut down the numbers of royal employees in order to "relever nostredit Peuple des très-grans griefz & oppressions qu'il a eu par la grant multitude des Sergens extraordinaire" (relieve our people of the great burdens and oppression they had had to bear because of the large multitude of extraordinary officers).[109]

Isabeau's Third Political Phase

The assassination of Louis of Orleans ushered in a third phase of Isabeau's political career. Characteristic of this period was her attempt to keep either

the Burgundian or the Orleanist/Armagnac factions from gaining complete control over the government while effacing herself and preparing the dauphin Louis of Guyenne to take up the vacancy left by the king's "absences." Through royal ordinances, she saw to the expansion of the dauphin's role. Although she retained veto power over her son, she remained much in the background during this period. This phase came to an end with the death of Louis of Guyenne in December 1415 at the age of eighteen.

Isabeau has been criticized for vacillating between the princes during this period. Why did she not build her own party to support the dauphin and the king? Timur Pollack-Lagushenko has cautioned against assuming that fifteenth-century factions resembled modern parties with consistent supporters. Indeed, neither the Armagnac nor the Burgundian faction, nor the supporters that the queen attempted to siphon off from both, he writes, could be considered "a party in any real sense," for they all lacked any "stable membership."[110] Early fifteenth-century French aristocrats retained freedom over "how they dispense political and military support," and switching sides was frequent.[111] The notion of a queen's party in such a context can only be "an artificial device used to describe the fluctuating levels of support offered to the dukes of Orléans and Burgundy by individual princes at specific historical moments. The two other 'parties' are barely more substantial."[112] In such a context Isabeau's best strategy was to maintain the conflict at a low enough level to avoid letting either faction establish *tutelle* over the king, absorbing the monarchy. In this way, she could save the throne for her son, who as an adult might be able to force peace. To carry out her strategy, she formed alliances with whichever side posed the lesser threat to her, was less likely to remove the dauphin from her influence, and was more able to prevent the other side from doing so at any given moment.

Recast in these terms, her strategy looks successful, up until the sudden death of Louis of Guyenne. From 1409 to 1413 the Duke of Burgundy and his followers were useful to her. From 1413 to 1415, it was the Armagnacs. After the death of Louis of Guyenne in 1415, however, both threatened the queen's very existence. They each wanted only to gain control over the new dauphin and viewed her as an obstacle to their ambitions.

Jean sans Peur returned to Paris in March 1408, where Franciscan theologian Jean Petit proclaimed a justification for the murder, subsequently sent out to the leaders of Europe. The king was insane during the oration, having suffered a lapse just before Jean's arrival, but he made a partial recovery the following day. Apparently favorably swayed by what he was in-

formed of the defense, he issued a pardon for his cousin, absolving Jean of Louis's murder.[113]

Isabeau's reactions to the pardon indicate her anxiety that Jean was preparing to seize power. In February, she had called the Duke of Brittany, husband of her daughter, Jeanne, to Paris with his army. Additional military support from the King of Sicily and the Duke of Berry arrived to prevent Jean's occupying Paris and dominating the king, which were the means by which the Duke of Burgundy was expected to take control of the government.[114] Although the king was in a remission, these were always temporary, and, when he was insane, power lay in the physical possession of the dauphin. Thus Isabeau needed to remove the boy before Jean got hold of him. Immediately after Petit's justification, she retreated to the safety of Melun with the royal children. Once there, she fortified the citadel.[115] She and the children remained in Melun throughout the spring, safe from the Duke of Burgundy, until he was recalled to his territories by an uprising in Liege that summer.

Isabeau received messages from Jean on June 26 and 27.[116] It is not known what they said, but on July 2, the Dukes of Guyenne, Berry, and Bavaria, and the Archbishop of Sens and the Bishop of Chartres, met with the king, who by then had joined his family in Melun, to cancel the pardon he had awarded Jean in March.[117] The pertinent document reveals the king's muddled state, for, in it, Charles claims that Jean had told the king that his brother Louis "avoit machiné & machinoit de jour en jour à la mort & expulsion de nous & de nostre generation & tendoit par plusieurs voyes & moyens à parvenir à la couronne & seigneurie de nostredit royaume" (had worked and was working every day for our death and the expulsion of us and our generation and attempted by different means to take the crown and lordship of the realm).[118] But, the king continues, "ne nous fust fait aucune mention de la mort de nostre frere . . . mais nous fut seulement dit qu'il avoit esté battu par le consentement de nostredit cousin" (the death of our brother was never mentioned to us . . . but we were only told that he had been beaten up by the consent of our said cousin).[119] For this reason, he claims, he declares his pardon null and void. It should be noted that the queen is not mentioned as present at the meeting to cancel the pardon, whereas the dauphin's presence is noted. Isabeau had already begun to efface her own position to promote that of her son.

However, she remained a guiding force for the dauphin. She reminded Parisians visually of her role as mentor when she and the boy returned on August 26 to Paris, where they received a joyful greeting, as Monstrelet recounts:

> En ces jours la Royne de France qui avoit séjourné à Meleun par certains jours, vint à Paris et amena son fils le Dauphin, lequel estoit monté sur ung blanc cheval que conduisoient quatre hommes de pié, et aloit après le chariot de ladicte Royne. . . . A laquelle venue fut faicte grande léesse des Parisiens, et fut crié Noël en plusieurs lieux.
> [In those days the Queen of France who had spent some time at Melun, came to Paris and brought her son, the dauphin, who was riding a white horse led by four men on foot, and after them came the chariot of the queen. . . . The entry created great joy among the Parisians, who cried "Noël" in many places.][120]

The entry staged the hierarchy of authority that was to be maintained: the queen rode discreetly behind the dauphin. All eyes were turned on the young man, who was making his first public appearance in a procession. To further clarify Isabeau's relationship to the government for the Parisians, on September 5, 1408, Jean Juvénal des Ursins, lawyer for the king, announced the Royal Council's decision before a crowd of princes of the blood, prelates, and the people, that given that the king was ill, the dauphin young, and the lords divided in hatred against each other, it was best that the queen continue to preside over the government.[121] The queen asserted her authority again on September 11, when, armed with the king's revocation of the pardon of Jean sans Peur, she had Jean Petit's defense refuted.

But Isabeau's triumph did not last. Enthusiastically greeted by the Parisians when he returned after a decisive victory over the rebellious Liegeois at Othea in November, Jean exuded a power that subdued the Orleanists. Still, the queen remained proactive. Once again, she employed her strategy of simply removing the family from Jean's grasp, spiriting them off to Tours before his arrival in Paris. On November 2, Charles, insane, was carried away by boat. He was joined in Gien by the queen, the royal children, the Kings of Sicily and Navarre, and Jean of Berry. The group then proceeded to Tours.[122]

From Tours, on January 18, 1409, a new royal ordinance was issued, reinforcing the central role of the dauphin, who would celebrate his thirteenth birthday on January 22. When the queen was occupied, the Duke of Guyenne was to make decisions, although he would report them to the queen. The strategy was undoubtedly to reinforce the boy's authority—although he would be guided by his mother—to counter the Duke of Burgundy's power to arouse the Parisians. In the ordinance the king reiterates that he has called

on the queen to "pourveoir & secourir aux grands faitz & affaires de nostredit Royaume en nostre absence" (take care of and attend to the important events and affairs of our kingdom during our absences).[123] However, she sometimes finds herself unable to work as carefully and diligently as she would like. When this occurs, the dauphin will take over "pour Nous, de par Nous, & en nostre nom . . . à l'expedition & provision desdits grans besognes . . . après ce que tout aura premierement esté rapporté à nostredite Compaigne" (for us, on our behalf, and in our name, the expedition and provision of the said duties after these have first been reported to our said companion).[124]

Jean sans Peur pursued the royal family. He sent the Count of Hainaut-Holland, kinsman of Isabeau and father-in-law to her son, Jean of Touraine, to Tours to negotiate their return.[125] A Spanish counselor of the Duke of Burgundy makes two important observations about Isabeau at this time: that she had a great deal of influence over the king, who heeded her advice in all things, and that because she was very nervous about Jean sans Peur she was happy to negotiate with him.[126]

The result of the negotiations was a public reconciliation between the Duke of Burgundy and Charles of Orleans, son of the late Duke of Orleans, at Chartres Cathedral on March 9, 1409. Forced to participate, the new Duke of Orleans and his brother, Philip, the Count of Vertus, unwillingly accepted the twenty-one articles of the Peace of Chartres, which contained Jean sans Peur's defense of the assassination of Louis of Orleans. Although he offered his apologies to the children of Louis of Orleans, the Duke of Burgundy continued to insist that he had acted in the best interests of the kingdom. Also included was an agreement for a marriage between the Count of Vertus and one of Jean's daughters, which was never carried out. In tears, Charles and Philip accepted their cousin's apologies, swearing on a Bible to respect the peace. Valentina, Louis' widow, was not present, having died on December 4.[127]

Thus Jean was reinstated in the government. But the price of the Peace of Chartres was heavy for the kingdom, for the Duke of Burgundy's reappearance rekindled the feud with the House of Orleans. Bernard Guenée has hypothesized that the feud might have ended had Jean sans Peur only repented of the assassination rather than continuing to justify himself. The process for reestablishing peace normally included an acknowledgement of fault:

> Pour rétablir la paix troublée par un homicide, les sujets de Charles VI disposaient d'une procédure fort efficace. Un homicide était commis. Le

coupable avouait sa faute. Il s'absentait du pays. Ses parents parlementaient avec les parents de la victime. Tous s'entendaient sur une juste réparation. La justice du roi prenait acte de cet accord amiable. Le roi pardonnait le cas. Le coupable recevait de la chancellerie royale une "lettre de rémission." Et la société, un instant déchirée par la violence, retrouvait la paix.

[To re-establish peace disturbed by a homicide, the subjects of Charles VI had at their disposal a highly efficacious procedure. A homicide had been committed. The guilty one acknowledged his fault. He left the country. His relatives negotiated with those of the victim. Everyone agreed on a just compensation. The justice of the king took account of the amicable agreement. The king pardoned the case. The guilty one received a letter of remission from the chancellor. And the society, torn for a moment by violence, regained peace.][128]

Guenée's hypothesis finds support in research on feuding. Although violence was widespread, lasting hostility was avoidable, with wrongs most often settled through compensation.[129] But Jean's refusal to comport himself according to custom guaranteed that the strife would not end, and, knowing that the sons of the Duke of Orleans would seek vengeance despite their vow, Jean acted defensively. Throughout the spring and summer, he waited and watched his enemies, a group that, in addition to the Orleans sons, included the royal uncles the Dukes of Berry and Bourbon and marmouset Jean de Montaigu. The Duke of Burgundy struck in autumn, ridding himself of one of his primary detractors: he had Jean de Montaigu executed on the pretext of corruption, on October 17, 1409, despite the vigorous interventions of Isabeau and the Duke of Berry. Other royal officers were stripped of their charges and thrown in prison.[130]

For the moment, Jean sans Peur was master of Paris. Isabeau's task grew yet more difficult and urgent. On December 27, 1409, at a meeting in Vincennes, she had the Duke of Burgundy awarded *tutelle* of the dauphin. That the decision was the queen's is indicated within the ordinance granting *tutelle*.[131] The decision seems counterintuitive at first glance. But the thirteen-year-old boy was ready to be established in his own household, and he required male guidance in the arts of warfare and politics. Who could take on the role of mentor? The Duke of Berry was offered joint guardianship of the dauphin with Jean, but he refused the offer, claiming that he was too old for such a weighty responsibility.

Still, why appoint Jean sans Peur in the first place? Isabeau's decision has been variously viewed, with some seeing it as motivated by fear. I believe that this is true, but that the assessment must be nuanced. Undoubtedly she regarded the Duke of Burgundy with apprehension. But Isabeau's move seems strategic, a decision to co-opt rather than resist him: a decision forced on her, but one through which she nonetheless attempted to exercise dominion. It is important to realize that she did not relinquish control over her son, for decisions made by Jean regarding the *tutelle* were subject to her approval and the king's; she further guaranteed that the dauphin would feel her influence by seeing to it that her brother, Louis of Bavaria, held a position within the boy's entourage. As Theodor Straub explains, Louis would remain a constant companion and advisor in the dauphin's household.[132] As such, the move is in keeping with her pattern of promoting her son while remaining behind the scene herself. Far from signaling a defeat, Isabeau's passing of her son into the Duke of Burgundy's guardianship evidences her confidence in her son and in the strength of her influence over the boy.

But if the queen had settled with the Duke of Burgundy for the time being, the Orleanists did not accept her decision. They formed the League of Gien in opposition to Jean, allying themselves on April 15, 1410. Among the leading figures in the league were the Orleans sons, the Duke of Berry, and Bernard, Count of Armagnac, Charles VI's lieutenant-general for Languedoc, by whose name the party would then come to be known. On the day that the league was formed, the king's nephew Charles of Orleans contracted to marry the Count of Armagnac's daughter, Bonne.[133]

The confederation of Armagnacs gathered to march on Paris in autumn of 1410 to "rescue" the king and the dauphin from Jean. Isabeau was summoned to mediate between the factions. She met with the dukes and other mediators at Marcoussis. However, her efforts were in vain, as Monstrelet describes.[134] The situation continued to worsen throughout the fall. Although the university had supported the Duke of Burgundy in the past, they recognized that his assassination of Louis of Orleans and subsequent monopolization of the government had set in motion a conflict that would never end. Pintoin writes that representatives from the university were solicited by the king to deliver their assessment of the situation. Insisting that the hatred among the dukes was implacable, they advised that the only way out of the escalating violence was to remove all involved from power and replace them with wise men devoted to the public welfare.[135] Hostility was averted temporarily when Jean sans Peur suddenly offered to negotiate. On November

2 the Peace of Bicêtre was signed. The lack of seriousness with which the agreement was entered into, however, is proven by the fact that the Dukes of Berry, Bourbon, and Orleans were among a group signing a new alliance against Jean that very evening.[136]

War broke out again in 1411. For a time Jean retained the upper hand in this conflict, both in military superiority and in public relations. In control of an efficient propaganda machine, he painted the Armagnacs as traitors plotting to remove the king from the throne and concluding a peace treaty with the English, wherein the English promised not to conclude any peace treaties with Jean. In fact, both the Armagnacs and the Burgundians negotiated with the English. Jean also propagated a list of what he claimed to be taxes that the Armagnacs would impose if they managed to wrest power from him.[137]

But in 1412 Isabeau's relationship with her son began to bear fruit. Long maligned, Louis of Guyenne has been reevaluated by R. C. Famiglietti, who proposes an analysis of the logic behind his apparent oscillations after the revolt led by Simon Caboche (discussed in greater detail below), that is, as of late 1413.[138] According to Famiglietti, the dauphin carried out a carefully wrought strategy. His plan was to play the factions off against one another in hopes of eventually drawing enough support away from both to be able to force them to reconcile. But I believe that we can date the dauphin's proactivity to an earlier date than the aftermath of the Cabochian revolt. The young man assumed the role of mediator on August 22, 1412, and brought about the Treaty of Auxerre.[139] Demonstrating a new determination and independence from Jean sans Peur, even before the Cabochian revolt, the dauphin forced the dukes to make peace. In the introduction to her *Livre de paix,* Christine de Pizan holds the boy out as the hope of the French people. The work begins on a celebratory note, declaring its purpose as the exhortation to Louis of Guyenne to continue the peace under the virtue of prudence.[140] True, the introduction to the work strikes an ominous chord, for Christine reveals here that the Peace of Auxerre was quickly disrupted and that she laid down her pen, discouraged, after completing only the first book. The Cabochian revolt intervened. But peace returns, and she takes up where she left off, "aprés les convenances de paix rejurees en la ville de Pontoise" (after the restoration of peace in the town of Pontoise).[141]

Unfortunately, the Treaty of Auxerre was futile owing to the absence of any enforcement mechanism.[142] At that time, the fifteen-year-old Duke of Guyenne was simply too weak in comparison with the Dukes of Orleans and Burgundy. A letter from a merchant of Lucca to his city magistrates under-

lines how powerful Jean seemed to contemporaries: "You may be quite sure that the Duke of Burgundy will remain the most influential and powerful prince of this kingdom. His power is based on the troops which he can raise in his lands. He can muster so many that he fears no one."[143] But the fact that Christine writes the break in peace into the *Livre de paix* indicates her hopefulness that the dauphin would eventually bring an end to the feud and impose himself as leader.[144] She urges the young man to soften the hardened hearts of the princes and thus maintain harmony between them:

> C'est que tu soies entre eulx tousjours moien de conduire voies de paix par si grant doulceur, non pas sans plus un moys ou deux, maiz a tousjours, que leurs cuers actraies et actendrisses tellement que le runge de la rancune passee tant pour l'amour de toy et de ta doulceur comme pour le bien d'eulx meismes, soit du tout effacié et tourné en amour, benivolence et union ensemble.
> [All this, in order that you may always be for them a means of following peaceful ways—not just for a month or two, but forever—by such gentleness that you entice and soften their hearts. So let the sting of past rancor, as much as for the love of you and your gentleness as for their own good, be altogether smoothed away and turned into love, benevolence, and unity.][145]

Other signs of the dauphin's growing determination to resist Burgundian influence can be gleaned from Monstrelet's description of a row that occurred during a meeting of the Royal Council in 1412. On this occasion the chancellor of France, Arnaud de Corbie, and Jean de Nielles, close associate of Jean sans Peur who had appointed him the dauphin's personal chancellor in 1410, began to fling insults at one another. Arnaud remarked to Jean that his word was no "évangile."[146] Jean responded that Arnaud "mentoit par ses dens" (lied through his teeth).[147] Filled with ire, the dauphin intervened, grabbing the Burgundian Jean de Nielles by the shoulders, tossing him from the room, and shouting that he was relieved of his job. His new chancellor, Jean de Vailly, lawyer in the Parlement, was instated with the help of Isabeau, according to Juvénal des Ursins.[148] According to Monstrelet, the Duke of Burgundy took anxious note of the dauphin's new tendencies: he "percevoit assez que toutes les besongnes se machoinoient en entencion de le bouter hors du gouvernement dudit royaume" (he perceived that the machinations were carried out with the goal of removing him [Jean sans Peur] from government of the said kingdom).[149]

To counter the dauphin's growing independence, Jean sans Peur turned his attention to stirring up trouble among the Parisians. Thinking that he could use the unrest to frighten Louis of Guyenne back into his camp, he encouraged discontent in a city that had been smoldering with friction among the different social groups for several years. In February 1413, the Estates General of Northern France met in Burgundian-controlled Paris and ordered reforms. Jean encouraged the Paris butchers to rise up at the same time under their leader, Simon Caboche. The butchers seized control in Paris, and Caboche became bailiff. Full revolt broke out in April and May.

The most important butcher families, the Saint-Yon, the Thibert, the Guérin, the Deux-Epées, and the Légois, were wealthy and respected.[150]And yet, as Alfred Coville notes, these were *gens de métier;* a gulf separated them from Paris's ruling class. Powerful, they could muster followers, but these followers included some of doubtful character. As Coville explains, they were valets, "dévoués aux bouchers, prêts à les aider, à les suivre et même à les devancer. C'était comme une petite armée que la corporation pouvait lever à son gré dans Paris, et une armée qu'aucune violence, aucun excès ne devait effrayer." (devoted to the butchers, ready to help them, to follow and even procede them. It was like a small army that the corporation could raise when it wished in Paris, an army that no amount of violence or excess could frighten.)[151] Already for the year 1411 Juvénal des Ursins explains that the butchers were followed by "gens de plusieurs mestiers de Paris, chirugiens, . . . pelletiers, et coustumiers (people of several trades of Paris, surgeons, furriers, and tailors). But, he continues, attached to these were "gens pauvres, et meschans desirans piller et desrober (poor people and bad ones wanting to pillage and steal).[152]

The revolt quickly raged beyond the ability of Jean sans Peur to control. The ruling *cives,* as Pintoin calls them, were outraged by the behavior of the rebels, as was the respected theologian Jean Gerson, who as Brian McGuire writes "described the Cabochiens as low class people who exercised tyranny."[153] They broke the doors and windows at the Duke of Berry's Hôtel de Nesle, forced the *prévôt des marchands* and many of his circle to leave the city, and led a hostile group into the hotel of the dauphin.[154] They threatened clerics and officers close to the king and queen with imprisonment and even execution. Still, on May 26, Charles VI issued the ordinance for administrative reform known as the Ordonnance cabochienne, which proposed changes to the administration of the kingdom in 258 articles. All gifts and pensions granted by the king, queen, and the dauphin were revoked; many royal offices were abolished.

But the rebels' success was short-lived. The university refused to support them, and the dauphin, outraged at the chaos Jean sans Peur had provoked and was now helpless to staunch, summoned the Armagnacs for assistance in crushing the revolt. The *cives* backed him in his appeal. Furthermore, the king, lucid as of May, added his support to the Armagnacs. They arrived to surround Paris. The Cabochians fell on August 4, and the articles of the Peace of Pontoise were published. With the *Ordonnance cabochienne* withdrawn, the Duke of Burgundy's reputation was permanently tarnished. The dauphin, for his part, emerged from the crisis a hero, at least as far as Pintoin is concerned. He describes the young man in glowing terms for restoring the peace, referring to him as *generosissimus juvenis*.[155]

Isabeau signed an alliance with Charles of Orleans on January 29, 1414. But the Armagnac ascendance turned out to be as catastrophic as the Burgundians' had been. One serious obstacle rapidly manifested itself: the Armagnacs were unwilling to defer to Louis of Guyenne, who at nearly seventeen years old was in a position to demand their respect.[156] Anxious to retain their hard-won power, they had no interest in reconciling with the Burgundians, which was the result sought by the dauphin. As Famiglietti explains, Charles of Orleans and the dauphin fell out early, probably because Charles defied the dauphin's orders to stop appearing in public in mourning for his father, an action that the dauphin considered incendiary given the tense atmosphere of Paris.[157] Charles of Orleans, for his part, seems to have convinced the king to keep the dauphin from attending meetings of the Royal Council throughout October and November of 1413. Indeed, according to the chronicler the Bourgeois of Paris, the young man was locked away and not allowed to be seen by anyone but Armagnacs.[158] The dauphin did not accept this treatment docilely. To counter the Armagnacs' hold over him, in December, he summoned Jean sans Peur back to Paris. Famiglietti writes that his goal was simply to frighten the Armagnacs into listening to him, because he knew that Jean could not occupy Paris without royal assistance, which would not be forthcoming.[159] Furthermore, the dauphin appears to have taken part in a failed plot to arm citizens of Paris to rise up against the Armagnacs.

Isabeau, however, intervened at this point, apparently viewing this attempt to use the Armagnacs and Burgundians against each other as dangerous and dismissing Louis's accomplices from their offices in his household.[160] Still, the hostilities wore on. To be the definitive victors in the feud, the Armagnacs would have needed to destroy Jean once and for all, but they were unable to do so. The Duke of Burgundy continued to threaten Paris. The

Armagnacs chased him, but without success; indeed, they were forced into the Peace of Arras on September 4, 1414, after an unsuccessful siege upon that city.

The situation, already bad enough, took a turn for the worse for all the French, when, as Richard Vaughan has described it, "the youthful and ambitious Henry V of England, one of the most aggressive and shifty products of an age of violence and duplicity, prepared and executed an invasion of France for his own advantage and renown, behind the usual smoke screen of ambassadors."[161] The disastrous battle of Agincourt was the result on October 25, 1415. The "flower of French knighthood" fell on the battlefield, and Charles of Orleans was taken prisoner by the English, to be held for twenty-five years. Jean sans Peur did not come to the aid of the king at Agincourt, although his brothers Anthony, Duke of Brabant, and Philip, Count of Nevers, died fighting the English.

Still, the tide might have turned had Louis of Guyenne survived to become king. But tragedy struck December 15, 1415. On that day, Isabeau's great hope for the future of the monarchy vanished when the dauphin, only eighteen, took ill and died unexpectedly.[162] The kingdom was deprived of its best hope for an end to the feud. As for Isabeau's personal situation, abruptly it became unclear, for her position long had been that of mentor to the dauphin. It was not certain that she would be able to further her quest for reconciliation, for the political tendencies of the new dauphin, Jean of Touraine, were not obvious.[163] This dauphin, who had been raised since childhood by the family of his wife, resided in Hainaut. His family status as son-in-law of William Count of Hainaut-Holland would seem to incline him to favor the Burgundians, but the Count of Hainaut-Holland initially refused to send his son-in-law to Paris, cautiously biding his time to see what would happen.[164] While he waited, the Duke of Burgundy's troops plundered the country preparatory to an attempt to take Paris.

The king, apparently lucid at the time and fearing the advancing army of Jean sans Peur, awarded the office of constable to Bernard, Count of Armagnac, who was in the south, urging him to march northward with an army as quickly as possible. Bernard arrived in Paris on December 27.[165] Count William, torn between his duty to the king, under the control of the Armagnacs, and his long-term alliance with the Burgundians, kept the dauphin beside him. In the meantime, Bernard of Armagnac made himself despised in Paris—in particular by raising taxes to continue the struggle against the Burgundians.[166]

Throughout 1416, Pintoin notes, Isabeau worked actively to restore peace between the warring parties.[167] The Armagnacs, however, had as little desire as ever to reconcile with their enemy, and thus the queen's attempts rendered her suspect with them. Armagnac discomfort increased when Jean sans Peur met with William of Hainaut-Holland in November 1416, and concluded a pact with the count regarding the dauphin. Jean and William swore to work to establish a viable government in Paris. From their perspective, this necessarily meant routing the Armagnacs. In this atmosphere, Isabeau refused an invitation to meet the dauphin in Compiègne, fifty miles from the capital, fearing to advance too far into territory where she would be at the mercy of a possibly hostile group.[168] Instead, she went halfway to Compiègne to Senlis, where she received visits from the dauphine, Jacqueline of Bavaria, and the dauphine's mother, Marguerite of Hainaut-Holland. At the same time, Count William descended to Paris to negotiate with the Armagnacs, to whom he demanded that the Duke of Burgundy be allowed to enter the city. The demand was refused.

Because control of the dauphin was critical to his remaining in power, the Count of Armagnac could not permit a rapprochement between Jean sans Peur and Isabeau. But on April 4, 1417, the possibility that this would happen vanished, for the dauphin Jean died, without ever having been reunited with his mother. Isabeau sent her physician to her son as soon as she received news of his illness, but nothing could be done. The situation was now dire for Isabeau, for her youngest son Charles, married to the daughter of the Duke of Anjou, recently turned rabid Armagnac, was the only remaining male heir to the throne. Thus the Armagnacs possessed the dauphin. They placed the queen under surveillance. Moreover, they knew that she had been setting aside a treasure of jewels and money that they needed desperately to prolong their war against the Burgundians. On April 18, a group of Armagnacs accompanied the king to Isabeau's court in Vincennes, arrested Louis Bosredon, her *maître d'hôtel,* on the pretext that her court was behaving scandalously, dismantled her household, imprisoned her in Tours, and confiscated her savings to pay their soldiers.[169] She was thus separated from her daughter, Catherine, and also the wife of the new dauphin, Marie of Anjou, and Catherine of Alençon, wife of her brother, Louis of Bavaria.

The Armagnac-Burgundian conflict raged on, with the Duke of Burgundy preparing once again to march on Paris. He conducted himself like the kingdom's ruler, receiving an ambassador of the King of Portugal, signing an alliance with the Duke of Brittany, and sending out letters to towns to explain

his intention of delivering the king from his captors and restoring the peace. Pintoin, now horrified by the man he had earlier championed against Louis of Orleans, reports his own amazement that the duke had appropriated such authority so easily and writes that he sought an explanation. He was informed that the French were simply tired of being crushed with taxes and wanted nothing but peace. They were willing to follow anyone who could deliver it: "Vivat, vivat, qui dominari poterit, dum tamen manere possit res publica in pulcritudine pacis!" (Long live anyone capable of governing, if only the republic might rest in the beauty of peace).[170]

As the feud wore on, Henry V decided to renew the war he had begun in 1415. On August 1, he landed in Normandy with forty thousand of his men. Easily taking Caen and conquering lower Normandy, he continued inexorably toward Paris.

Isabeau's Final Political Phase

From her Armagnac prison, Isabeau either called on Jean sans Peur for deliverance, or perhaps he convinced her to let him deliver her. According to Monstrelet, Isabeau asked the duke for aid, which he provided, transporting her to Troyes.[171] Pintoin, however, explains that Jean, largely successful in his bid to win the hearts of the inhabitants of Normandy and Ile-de-France, decided that he would need the authority represented by the queen to make a claim for government, because the dauphin and the king were both creatures of the Armagnacs. Thus he requested that the queen join him, rescuing her on November 1.[172] Whatever the case, with this rescue, the queen entered the fourth and final phase of her career. She asserted her right to exercise the regency powers that had heretofore remained latent in the ordinance of 1403, reiterated in 1407. Always before she had remained carefully in the background. But now she stepped forward, proclaiming herself regent in a series of letters sent out to the towns and claiming the king to be held against his will by the Armagnacs.

And yet, on January 10, 1418, she resumed her accustomed role of working behind the scenes by designating Jean sans Peur regent of France.[173] Together they abolished the Parlement and Chambres des comptes in Paris and established counterparts almost one hundred miles southeast of Paris in Troyes. But to guarantee their government, the pair would have to capture Paris and physically bring the king to their side. Jean attacked, but initially failed to take the city from the Armagnacs. He succeeded on May 28, 1418,

with the help of a collaborator, Perrinet Leclerc, who opened the gates of Paris to the Burgundian captain, Villiers de l'Isle d'Adam. The dauphin fled. In a horrific massacre, the Burgundians seized control of the king from the Armagnacs, killing their leader, Bernard.

Pintoin recounts that a group of Parisians solicited the queen and the Duke of Burgundy to enter the city and restore peace after the massacre.[174] Isabeau sent a message to the dauphin, Pintoin continues, asking him to enter Paris with them, but he refused. The Parisians, among whom Jean sans Peur had always enjoyed support, welcomed the queen accompanied by Jean on July 14. They were greeted first by twelve hundred "borgois de la ville" (citizens of the city) led by a contingent of men at arms.[175] The king received them kindly, and they established themselves in Paris.

Isabeau's concern was still to restore peace with her son. However, the dauphin Charles had assumed leadership of the Armagnacs with the slaying of Bernard in May. As a faction leader, he participated directly in the feud, and, like the Armagnacs, he refused to negotiate with Jean. In this he was different from his brother Louis of Guyenne, who had distinguished himself from the factions, regarding his own role as mediatory, his goal as the restoration of peace. On his side, Jean sans Peur was equally intransigent. When he was offered the possibility of restoring a lasting peace by supporting the dauphin as regent for his father, he refused. At least as far as the chronicle of Juvénal des Ursins is concerned, peace between the dauphin and Jean would have been possible had Jean agreed to retire definitively from the government. But Juvénal des Ursins observes angrily that Jean rejected this opportunity for concord:

> Il n'est aucun doute que si le duc de Bourgongne ne eust voulu se retirer d'avoir tout le gouvernement, et se disposer et les siens à resister aux ennemis anciens, et laisser le fils avec le pere et la mere, à faire le mieux qu'ils pourroient, la paix estoit bien aisée à faire. Mais il vouloit tout faire, et avoit entierement le gouvernement du royaume, et des finances: mesmes il sembloit par ses manieres de faire, comme aucuns disoient, qu'il se voulust faire Roy.
> [There is no doubt that if the Duke of Burgundy had wanted to pull back from the government and decided along with his men to resist the old enemy and leave the son with his father and mother to do the best they could, peace would have been easy to make. But he wanted to do everything and have entire control of the kingdom and the finances: it even seemed, as some said, that he wanted to make himself king.][176]

The factions seemed irreconcilable until July 11, 1419, when the two princes swore peace at Pouilly, near Melun.[177] For a period of about two months, a union appeared to be within grasp, the final agreement requiring just the last details. After several delays, Charles requested a meeting for September 10, this time on the bridge at Montereau. But rather than the negotiations the Burgundians had expected, the Armagnacs finally avenged the death of Louis of Orleans, hacking Jean to death with an axe. The Duke of Burgundy finally paid for his ambition with his own violent death.

Isabeau must have greeted news of her son's participation in the assassination with despair. She would have believed that peace was imminent when Jean sans Peur set off to meet Charles at the bridge at Montereau. The revenge killing caused Charles VI to disinherit his son.[178] The black legend of Isabeau has always maintained that with the Treaty of Troyes, which provided for the marriage of her daughter Catherine of Valois to Henry V and assigned the French royal succession to Henry V and his children, she denied the paternity of Charles. Presumably her purpose would have been to invalidate his claims to the throne with the goal of strengthening her own position within the Burgundian network. But the notion that she disinherited her son as illegitimate, like the stories of her promiscuity, came into existence only after her death. The king's dispossession of his son was the response to the dauphin's violent reprisal of the feud his parents had been struggling without success to stop for twenty years.

As for the final moment in Isabeau's political career, the Treaty of Troyes, the analysis of her role presented by Paul Bonenfant in 1958 already offered a sympathetic image of the queen as torn between conflicting duties to her son and to peace, holding out as long as possible in the face of terrible pressure from the new Duke of Burgundy, named Philip, like his grandfather, and the English. But already by the summer of 1419, Henry V had conquered all of Normandy and demanded that the inhabitants acknowledge him as legitimate ruler through an oath of allegiance.[179] Ultimately she ceded to what must have been a persuasively posed argument by Henry V's messenger, Louis de Robersart, who arrived without a delegation to confer alone with Isabeau in January 1420. What he said to the queen to enlist her support for Henry V remains a mystery, but Robersart was from Hainaut, spoke French natively, held possessions from the house of Bavaria, and, trusted friend of Henry, he also possessed English nationality; he had the confidence of all involved.[180] Although the Treaty of Troyes has been badly viewed from a patriotic perspective, it is crucial to keep in mind that in 1420, many in the

French kingdom were perfectly happy with the settlement. The English had possessed enormous territories within the country since Eleanor of Aquitaine's marriage to Henry II of England; there was nothing new about English lordship for many French speakers. Although Henry V was English, his son would be both English and French. Thus within the space of one generation, the French would be governed by a French king. As Mark Warner argues, "there were numerous Frenchmen who felt that their interests might best be served by aligning themselves with the Anglo-Burgundians rather than with the party of Charles VII."[181] In 1420, anger about the treaty was motivated not by a sense of betrayed nationalism but by factional loyalties. Although the dauphin's disinheritance had the effect of later inspiring the written articulation of the principles of royal succession, these did not exist fully at the time.

After the treaty, Isabeau resided in English-controlled Paris, at the royal residence of the Hôtel St. Pol, leading a sober and relatively diminished existence.[182] She seems to have exerted no further influence over political affairs. But the peace she had hoped for was elusive. Henry V died in 1422, followed shortly by Charles VI in that same year. Regency of the realm passed to the brother of Henry V, John of Lancaster, Duke of Bedford, for the heir, Henry VI, was a baby of nine months. Charles and the Armagnacs continued their struggle for power. Still, Isabeau was not entirely forgotten by the new administration. Clément Fauquembergue, *greffier* of the Parlement of Paris, records that she was visited in September 1423, by the Duke of Burgundy, the Count of Richmond, and the Duke of Bedford.[183] And yet, several chroniclers mention her degraded estate. The Bourgeois of Paris refers to her as *pauvrement gouvernée*.[184] But if she lived in poverty compared to her former life, she was nonetheless surrounded by a small entourage of beloved friends. Her last years were hardly lonely ones. Catherine of Alençon, her brother's second wife, was at her side, as was Amélie von Ortenburg, Madame de Moy, native of Germany, who had probably already joined the queen in 1405, and served her as a *dame d'honneur* from 1409 to 1417, rejoining the queen near the end of her life.[185] Others appear in the documents: Marie de Brimiers, Jacqueline de'Amboise, and Madame de La Frete.[186] The queen died in 1435.

To return to the point with which I introduced this chapter, on balance, one cannot call the career of Isabeau of Bavaria successful. However, her lack of success must be attributed to bad luck rather than incompetence. A long series of "what might have been" highlights the magnitude of her ad-

verse fortune. Had Isabeau been a widow, like Blanche of Castile, her role would have been clearer, and there is a chance that she could have siphoned off enough support for the dauphin from the two factions to have forced them to give up their claims on the government. But with Charles VI jealously reclaiming his throne during his periods of recovery, Isabeau's role never became anything more substantial than temporary substitute for the king, a role that did not afford her sufficient authority to wrestle the dukes into submission. Unlike the dukes, who maintained the constant support of their followers, Isabeau fulfilled a restrained and essentially unstable role. Or had the dauphin Louis of Guyenne survived long enough to impose his authority upon the factions, forcing the Armagnacs and Burgundians to reconcile, Isabeau would occupy a position of respected queen-mother in the collective imagination today. Or had the dauphin Jean survived to establish a stable government with Jean of Burgundy, defeating the Armagnacs, once again, her reputation as loving and protective queen-mother would be guaranteed today. Or had Henry V survived to old age, remained popular, ushered in an era of relative peace and economic expansion, and given birth to a mentally robust son, the double monarchy might have survived the resistance of Charles VII and gone on to die a gentler death later in the century. Or had Philip of Burgundy assumed regency of the kingdom after the death of Charles VI instead of the Duke of Bedford, peace might have ensued. Nicole Pons writes that "Philip enjoyed considerable support even outside his own lands: the example of the Parisians' attachment to the Dukes of Burgundy was not an isolated instance, and many living in the kingdom would certainly have been willing to obey him."[187] Or to go back to the beginnings of the feud, had Philip of Burgundy produced no male heirs, the conflict between him and Louis of Orleans would have vanished with his death before causing much damage. Had any of these events, all of them beyond Isabeau's control, turned out differently, a positive outcome for her career would have been possible.

CHAPTER TWO

Isabeau of Bavaria

Her Afterlife

Isabeau lies there still today, next to the husband she once adored and then betrayed—as she had her lover, her children, and her countrymen. It is an ironic end for a woman whose one true allegiance was to herself, whose shifting loyalties cast aside all those closest to her.

THE ISABEAU WHOSE STORY I have just recounted appears above all to have been circumspect. During her lifetime, she was at best respected, at worst ignored. Even regarding the now infamous Treaty of Troyes, her contemporaries were not uniformly critical of her attempt to put an end to a conflict between implacable enemies, a conflict that had already caused extensive damage and promised to continue indefinitely. Of course she was reviled by the Armagnacs for her role in disinheriting the dauphin Charles. Still, even the Armagnacs did not unanimously despise her, many of them claiming that she had been forced against her will into the Burgundian camp, as I discuss in chapter seven.

None of the unfortunate queen's actions accounts adequately for the scorn that she has aroused over the centuries and continues to attract to this day. Unlucky in life, as we have seen, she was even unluckier in death, victim of a concatenation of misunderstandings that over time crystallized into a dark mythology. In this chapter on the queen's vilification, I take as a point of departure Pierre Nora's notion of *lieux de mémoire*. For Nora, when cultures lose contact with their immediate pasts, they move from basing their identity on *milieux de mémoire,* meaning genuine collective memory, that is, "settings in which memory is a real part of everyday experience," to *lieux de mémoire,* taken to mean constructed memories, which they fabricate "because there are no longer any *milieux de mémoire*."[1] True, Nora's distinction has been challenged on various grounds, among them that *milieux de mémoire* are often already *lieux de mémoire*. Helpful as the binary may be in theorizing memory, I agree that a sharp distinction between the two cannot

be maintained in practice.[2] French writers of the fifteenth century, still potentially in contact with the living Isabeau, were already reflecting on her meaning and constructing collective memories of her against which to imagine their communities.

Still, the concept of *lieu de mémoire* in this broader sense clarifies why Isabeau's negative reputation is so incommensurate with the generally positive ways in which she was represented during her lifetime. As a *lieu de mémoire* she has served from the very beginning as a *repoussoir* against which to construct French identity, and thus the created meaning of her career has always been more significant than the truth. To test this hypothesis in what follows, I explore the different layers of Isabeau's vilification, explaining how her various meanings served over time as negative figures against which to create positive identities.

The oldest layer is her alleged promiscuity, which seems to have been floated shortly before her death by the English to justify Henry VI's kingship. The image of the meddling political schemer is a somewhat later and independent development, appearing for the first time in some late sixteenth century treatises on female regency by legal historians, "the historical school of the parlement of Paris," whose members, in addition to their official duties, "were concerned both with investigating historical problems and with 'restoring to light the books of their own language.'"[3] Many of their treatises present an innocuous image of the queen. However, some depict her negatively, with political intriguing and opportunism—but never promiscuity—as her chief sins. Increasingly distant from the ideology of feuding that had animated the fifteenth century, and guided by the assumption that women are fickle, some legal historians condemned the queen for the oscillating loyalties that they discovered either in Pintoin, whose narrative informs us who was allied with whom, or in the documents that record the alliances. The next development of the legend was the association of the queen with the Cour amoureuse, the Court of Love, whose charter was discovered in the early eighteenth century. Now in addition to her own shortcomings, Isabeau was the leader of a frivolous gaggle of courtiers. Finally all the different strands of the legend converge in the outrageous morality tale devoted to the crimes of the queens of France by Louise de Keralio. Here Isabeau is explicitly posited as a prototype of Marie-Antoinette. This character, the very incarnation of stupefying self-indulgence, spending money as her people starve and leading a wild and merry life at a corrupt court while committing adultery with her brother-in-law and eventually selling the country to the enemy,

represents the antithesis of the ideal *citoyenne*. This is the Isabeau who was then woven into nineteenth-century histories, whose authors added their anti-German sentiment to their reading of the Treaty of Troyes, even as they claimed to be examining the queen objectively. In this form, the queen's legend was passed down to the twentieth century.

Isabeau has served a variety of purposes. As this chapter suggests, she represented something entirely different for fifteenth-century English rumormongers seeking to justify the English claim to the French throne than for sixteenth-century legal historians defining regency or eighteenth-century citizens justifying their overthrow of the monarchy. However, over the years, the layers of her vilification have melded into an all-purpose negative *exemplum* flexible enough to provide an antitype for most virtues associated with "Frenchness." Exposing the various strands of the queen's legend as constructions demonstrates starkly how a few misunderstandings can take on a life of their own. In the end, Nora's concept of *lieux de mémoire* is crucial to understanding why the legend has been so impervious to historical intervention. Her legend has been too meaningful to be dislodged through simple acts of demystification.

The Seeds of the Legend: Rumor of the Queen's Promiscuity

The story of the queen's promiscuity was circulating by 1429, but not before 1427. A Latin epic dedicated to Joan of Arc, the content of which suggests a date of sometime after the Maid's first appearance but before her capture, therefore sometime prior to May 30, 1430, announces unequivocally that Isabeau bore Charles VII in an adulterous liaison: "Proh inauditum scelus incognitam femine vesaniam confessa est iuvenem se ex adulterio peperisse." (Oh, crime unheard of! She revealed the unknown female insanity that she bore the young man out of adultery.)[4] Formerly attributed to the Venetian politician and humanist, Francesco Barbaro (1390–1454), the epic is now believed to have been composed by an observer of political life living in Normandy.

However, the rumor could not have been circulating before 1427. An insertion containing what may or may not be a reference to a love affair between the queen and Louis of Orleans in the chronicle of Jean Brandon, monk at the Abbey of Dunes, *if taken to refer to the love affair,* confirms the rumor existed in 1488, date of the death of Adrien de But, the chronicler

who made the insertion. A *terminus a quo* of 1427—if the reference is to a love affair—is provided by the date of the last of Brandon's notes: his own contribution to the chronicle ends in 1414, but he left notes through 1427. Had the rumor existed during Brandon's lifetime, he would have mentioned it in his text, that is, prior to 1427.

But does the insertion refer to a love affair? It reads:

> Mors Ludovici ducis Aurelianensis, de quo Brando Johannes, Dunensis cronographus ponit quod comuni concilio baronum interemptus fuerit, licet Johanni duci Burgundiae imputabatur culpa mortis ejus. Legi quoque gallice scriptum, dum Parisius, ubi cum rege fratre suo dictus dux Ludovicus saepius amore reginae ac puellarum ejus esset, quadam vice convenisse Johannem ducem Burgundiae, qui, absente rege, suffere non potuit ut cum regina se oblectaret dux Aurelianensis: quare stravit insidias, scilicet per quosdam qui mortem intulerunt.
> [The death of Louis Duke of Orleans, about whom Johannes Brandon Chronicler of Dune wrote that he was killed by common counsel of the nobles, may be attributed to Jean the Duke of Burgundy. Also, it can be read in a French work, that while in Paris, where, with the king, his brother, the said Duke Louis often was for love of the queen and her girls, he one time met Jean Duke of Burgundy, who could not stand it that the Duke of Orleans enjoyed himself with the queen when the king was absent; for this reason Jean spread jealousies, that is, among those who brought about the death.][5]

This insertion has been added to Brandon's description of the story of the murder of Louis. In the Brandon text, on the same page, we read only:

> Nam nullis luctus, ymmo cunctis gaudium de ejus morte fuit, cunctis asserentibus quod homo perniciosus et sceleratus, in manus suorum facinorum relictus, suis demeritis exigentibus, interiit. Dicebatur enim quia sacrosanctae ecclesiae hostis et scismatis auctor, unionem in ecclesiam fieri impedierit, viduarum et pauperum injuriator, matronarum nobilium et virginum etiam et sanctimonialium violator et infinitis facinoribus obnoxius, etiam fratris sui regis infestator, ejus langoris cause fuerit; quod insuper in mortem ducis Burgundiae, qui et comitis Flandriae, conjuraverit, insuper et populum gravibus exactionibus et tallionibus per Franciam oppresserit. Haec et multa alia fuerent de eo in villis tam Franciae quam Flandriae, praecipue Gandavi et Insulis, coram populo, per prae-

conum palam recitata. Fuit nichilominus de tanti principis occisione magnus inter omnes stupor et admiratio.

[For there was no sorrow, rather joy to all over this death, with all averring that the man was pernicious and criminal, and that he died, abandoned to his crimes, driven by his defects. It was said that because he was an enemy of the holy Church and an author of the Schism, he impeded the union of the Church, he was an injurer of widows and poor people, a violater of noble matrons and virgins and nuns and guilty because of many crimes, molester of his brother, the king, of whose feebleness he was the cause; that in addition, he conspired in the deaths of the Duke of Burgundy and Count of Flanders, and in addition to this oppressed the people of France through heavy exactions and *tailles*. These and many other things about him were recited openly by a herald, before the people, in cities in France and Flanders, especially in Ghent and Lille. Nonetheless, there was great astonishment and wonder amongst everyone at the assassination of such an important prince.][6]

The word upon which the insertion's status as proof of an adulterous affair depends, *se oblectaret,* does not necessarily imply sexual pleasure; it often means "rejoiced" in a general sense. Such is the case, for example, for its use in Ecclesiastes 2:10, "cor quin omni voluptate frueretur et oblectaret se in his quae paraveram," meaning "for my heart rejoiced in what I had prepared." Thus the insertion might mean only that Jean was jealous that the queen and Louis enjoyed themselves together. If this is the case, the rumor could not have been circulating before 1427, for it would have been mentioned in this passage, already so full of invective. If we interpret the insertion as containing a sexual allusion, still, the date of the rumor can be no earlier than 1427. To reiterate, had it existed between 1414 and 1427, Brandon himself would have referred to it.

It appears, then, that Isabeau's vilification began no earlier than six years before her death. What would have motivated such a rumor at that point, when the queen was leading a quiet existence, no longer involved in politics? It may be that in 1429, threatened by Joan of Arc's sudden victory, the English would have felt the need to reinforce their claim to the throne. Once Joan was dead, the rumor may have faded temporarily, for it served no immediate purpose. But the English were forced once more to renew their justification for the throne of France as of 1435, when Philip the Good, son of Jean sans Peur, rejected his English allies and recognized Charles VII as king

of France in the Treaty of Arras.[7] At that point, the rumor may have been revived. This is suggested by the chronicle of Jean Chartier, named royal historiographer in 1437. In his *Chronique de Charles VII, roi de France,* Jean writes that the English shortened Isabeau's life by diminishing her estate.[8] But she had one more cause for sorrow, he continues: the English had spread a rumor that her son Charles was not the son of Charles VI.[9]

Officially, the English did not believe Charles VII to be a bastard. Paul Bonenfant writes that "jamais, durant toute la période étudiée jusqu'ici—c'est-à-dire de la mi-septembre 1419 à la mi-février,—aucune accusation de ce genre ne se trouve avancée pour écarter le dauphin du trône. Le roi d'Angleterre se borna simplement à invoquer ses droits anciens à la couronne de France." (never, during the entire period studied until now—that is to say from mid-September 1419 until mid-February—was any accustion of this type advanced to keep the dauphin from the throne. The King of England limited himself to invoking his ancient rights to the crown of France.)[10] Nor is there any such mention in the arguments against the Treaty of Arras written by Henry VI's secretary, Jean Rinel, in 1435.[11] Nonetheless, the fact that claims to the English throne had on other occasions been countered with the charge that the claimant was illegitimate allows one to imagine that the English may have employed a similar strategy toward the French to harm Charles VII, surreptitiously, through rumor. The Yorkist claim to the throne was disputed with the charge of illegitimacy. Richard of York based his claim to the throne on his relation to Lionel, Duke of Clarence, second son of Edward III (as opposed to the Lancasters, whose claim came through John of Gaunt, third son of Edward III), through his great-grandmother, Philippa, daughter of Lionel, Duke of Clarence. In his polemical booklets defending the Lancasters, Sir John Fortescue proclaimed that Philippa was illegimate.[12]

It is difficult to know how quickly or how widely the rumor spread once it was reignited. A number of examples of what modern historians have taken to be proof that it was circulating in the fifteenth century can be dismissed outright as misinterpretations, and others appear less than certain when they are closely examined. Some examples that must be dismissed include the myth that Joan of Arc gained the trust of Charles VII by revealing to him that he was not illegitimate but the true king of France. The chroniclers of Joan of Arc never claim this to be what the Maid told the king. Thomas Basin, chronicler of Charles VII, for example, writes simply that Joan had gone to Charles and revealed a secret. Charles related that "eam sibi tam secreta atque occulta, ad dictorum fidem adduxisse, que nullus morta-

lium preter seipsum, nisi divinitus habita revelacione, scire potuisset" (she revealed a secret to him such that he was led to faith in the sayings, a secret that no living person except himself could have known, except through a divine revelation).[13] Only if one already assumes Charles to have believed that he was illegitimate, a proposition for which there is no evidence, can one assume this to be the secret revealed by Joan.

Another example that must be dismissed is the allegorical pastoral, known as the *Pastoralet,* dated ca. 1422–25, which has long been cited as evidence that Isabeau and Louis were believed by their contemporaries to be involved in a romantic liaison.[14] The allegory relates the story of the Armagnac-Burgundian war through a dispute among shepherds, two of whom are engaged in a love affair. The pair is identified by the anonymous author as representing Louis of Orleans and Isabeau. However, the argument that this allegory reflects a contemporary rumor is very weak; indeed, the argument reverses the very premise of allegory as it is generally understood. As the author of the *Pastoralet* explains, his project is to recount facts in the form of "flables couvertes" (line 13, page 39). In other words, the truth will be told through fiction; the fiction is not the truth. But the adultery occurs on the ficitious level of the allegory (i.e., the story of the shepherds). The love affair is the object that must be interpreted to discover the truth, which must be in this case that Louis and Isabeau were political allies. To read the love affair as a literal truth is the same as to understand Orwell's allegory of the Russian revolution to mean that farm animals took over the country, or, to choose a medieval example, to assume that Christine de Pizan actually encountered three women called Raison, Droiture, and Justice. Of course, it may be the case that later readers of the *Pastoralet* unschooled in reading allegory mistook the work for a revelation of an affair between Louis and Isabeau. Still, there is no reason to imagine the original author of the *Pastoralet* to have been so ignorant of the conventions of the allegory he employed to tell his story.

As for likely or at least possible mentions of the rumor, a chronicle of Metz of 1438 by Jaique Dex may or may not pronounce Louis the lover of Isabeau. About Louis, to whom the chronicler is very partial, it is stated: "Et le tenoit on encore pour soupet de la royne, et lez mescreoit on moult fort la royne et lui" (And he was still held to be the "soupet" of the queen and they mistrusted him and the queen very much).[15] The word describing Louis's relationship to the queen, "soupet," is a hapax. The glossary to the edition notes, "soupet, mot douteux; paraît avoir le sens de 'galant, amant.'"[16] But

it is also important to note that the chronicler is very positive toward Louis and anti-Jean. In a section on all the nobles who died fighting the Turks, the chronicler remarks that it is a pity that Jean had not died fighting the Turks.[17] Why assume that "soupet" means "gallant, amant"? The definition would seem inevitable only to those who already believe that the rumor was circulating. Perhaps the word is a mispelling of the frequently-used "soubgez," for example, indicating that Isabeau was his political superior.

The history of Georges Chastellain (1430–75), chronicler in the service of the dukes of Burgundy, is another frequently cited example of proof of the rumor's circulation. Charles VII was despondent, Chastellain imagines, because two princes had ganged up against him and because he had been "delinqui de son pere et desavoué comme bastard" (abandoned by his father and disavowed as a bastard).[18] There is room, however, to question whether this means that Charles VII was disavowed because he was a bastard or that he was merely treated as if he were one: "desavoué comme bastard" might mean either.

Still, the rumor's circulation cannot be denied, however limited it may have been. The chronicle of Nicole Gilles (d. 1503) reports it in his description of the death of Isabeau:

> Ce fut une grant honte aux Angloys qui l'avoient en leurs mains de laisser en cest estat conduyre le corps de ladicte dame, à laquelle par le traité de marriage de sa fille avec le feu Roy ils avoient promis au feu Roy son mari et elle leur entretenir leur estat comme à roy et royne appartenoit. Toutes fois ilz n'en firent riens car ils leur laisserent avoir moult de nècessitez. Et qui plus est disoient à ladicte Royne que ledit Roy Charles son fils estoit illégitime et n'estoit point filz du Roy Charles. [It was shameful of the English who had her in their care to let the body of the said lady be conducted in such a state, for they had promised to her and her husband in the treaty of marriage of her daughter to the late king to treat them in a manner appropriate to the status of king and queen. Nonetheless, they did not do this for they left them in need. And moreover, they said to the said queen that the said King Charles her son was illegitimate and that he was not the son of King Charles.][19]

As he continues, because of this, "ladicte Dame eut si grant douleur au cuer qu'elle en mourut avant ses jours" (the said lady was so unhappy that she died prematurely). The words are so similar to those of Jean Chartier that Gilles's source must have been the *Chronique de Charles*

VII, roi de France. Still, his mention of it suggests that the rumor was circulating if nowhere else at least among a small group of chroniclers. Using similar words, Robert Gaguin (1434–1501) declares that "d'aucune chose celle royne tant ne fut irritée que quand la Roy d'Angleterre publioit son filz Charles (à present Roy) avoir esté né en concubinage incestueux" (nothing disturbed this queen as much as when the King of England announced her son Charles, the present king, to have been born of an incestuous union).[20]

Besides mention of the rumor in chronicles, a number of other sources testify to its existence. Future Pope Pius II and prolific writer, Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini (1405–64), reproduces it in *De Viris illustribus* of 1449.[21] Ten years later in his autobiographical *Commentarii* he puts the assertion that Charles VII was illegitimate into the mouth of Henry VI, who is addressing Philip the Good just after the murder of Philip's father, Jean sans Peur, at the hands of the men of Charles VII: "Abusa viri morbo, regina hoc monstrum ex alieno concepit" (Taking advantage of the illness of her husband, the queen conceived this monster outside the marriage).[22]

A commonly cited example attibutes Louis XI, Isabeau's grandson, with having referred to the queen as a *putana*. Auguste Brachet gives the source for the citation, quoting an Italian ambassador's comment that in 1479 Louis referred to Charles VI as *un pazo* (a crazy person) and his wife *una gran putana*.[23]

Historian Antoine Thomas offers evidence that the rumor circulated among villagers as well as among the literate, reporting that in 1457 an old Auvergnat called Jehan Batiffoll, having drunk too much one evening, announced that Charles VII was not the true king, for he did not possess the "royal sign." Suddenly realizing the trouble his drunken words might cause him, Jehan betook himself to the chancellor and received a royal letter of remission as a precaution. Thomas discovered the story in a record of the letter of remission, kept in the Archives Nationales.[24]

Discussion of the promiscuity rumor would not be complete without recalling the version of Brantôme, who gives it brief mention in his chapter on Louis XII, king of France and grandson of Louis of Orleans.[25] Brantôme wryly contrasts Louis XII with his grandfather, who was a "gallant, et trafiquoit de toute frette, comm'un bon marchand et marinier (gallant, and he trafficked in all types of cargo, like a good merchant and a sailor). Louis spent most of the night he was assassinated with his sister-in-law, Brantôme reports. And although he does not know whether the story is true or false,

he continues, the English king said that Charles VII was the offspring of an adulterous affair. Still, Brantôme is not in general critical of the queen. Later, in a section defending female regency, he remarks simply that Isabeau "eust la regence de son fils, son mary Charles VI, estant alteré de son bon sens, par l'advis de son conseil"(acted as regent for her son, her husband Charles VI, being mentally altered, as recommended by his council).[26]

"Even as France Had Been Lost by a Woman, It Would Be Saved by a Woman"

Finally, related to the promiscuity rumor is another important element of Isabeau's vilification, the pairing of the debauched queen with the pure maid, Joan of Arc. Collette Beaune writes of the queen that the "imagination populaire l'oppose à la Pucelle. Ce qui avait été perdu par une femme serait sauvé par une femme." (popular imagination opposed her to the Maid. What had been lost by a woman would be saved by a woman.)[27] There is nothing implausible in the idea that contemporaries of Joan of Arc contrasted her with Isabeau of Bavaria.

However, an explict example cannot be tracked down. The Maid herself is said to have stated that France, having been lost through a woman, would be restored by a virgin. The statement is reported in the record of Joan's *Procès en nullité* in 1455. Two witnesses, Joan's uncle, Durandus Laxart of Burey-le-Petit, and Catherine of Vaucouleurs, claim to have heard the Maid make the proclamation.[28] The testimony of Durandus reports that he "ipse eamdem Johannam fuit quesitum ad domum patris, et eam adduxit ad domum sue habitationis; et ipsa dicebat eidem testi quod volebat ire ad Franciam, versus dalphinum, ad faciendum eumdem coronare, dicendo: 'Nonne alias dictum fuit quod Francia per mulierem desolaretur, et postea per virginem restaurari debebat'" (went to seek this same Joan at her father's house and brought her to his house; she told the witness that she wished to go into France, to the dauphin, to have him crowned, saying, "Was it not formerly said that France should be desolated by a woman, and should be restored by a maid")? Durandus then took Joan to the home of Catherine in Vaucouleurs, where the young woman lived for about three weeks. While there, Joan spoke to Sieur Robert de Baudricourt, Captain of Vaucouleurs, to try to persuade him to lead her to the dauphin. According to Catherine, "dum ipsa Johanna vidit quod dictus Robertus nolebat eam ducere, dixit ipsa testis quod audivit eidem Johanne

dici quod oportebat quod iret ad dictum locum ubi erat dalphinus, dicendo: 'Nonne audistis quod prophetizatum fuit quod Francia per mulierem destrueretur, et per unam virginem de marchiis Lotharingie restauraretur?' Et tunc ipsa testis hec audisses recordata est, et stupefacta fuit." (when Joan saw that Robert refused to lead her to the king, she said to the witness that it was still necessary for her to go to the dauphin, saying, "Have you not heard that there was a prophecy that France would be destroyed by a woman and saved by a virgin from the Marches of Lorraine?" And then the witness said that she did remember having heard the prophecy and was stupefied.)[29]

But Joan is not said to have associated the prophecy with Isabeau, according to the witnesses at her *Procès en nullité,* although they would have had nothing to fear from doing so in 1455. It would have been difficult for supporters of Charles VII to accuse Isabeau of adultery, because this would have thrown his right to the throne into doubt. However, there would have been no reason not to blame her for handing the kingdom over to the English with the Treaty of Troyes. For modern readers, slipping the queen into the binary in opposition to the virginal Joan of Arc seems a natural move. As Anatole France writes in his history of Joan of Arc, "Of the two facts foretold [in the prophecy], the first, the evil one, had come to pass in the town of Troyes, when Madame Ysabeau had given the Kingdom of the Lilies and Madame Catherine of France to the King of England. It only remained to hope that the second, the good, would likewise come to pass."[30]

But was the move self-evident to the fifteenth-century public? If so, no one articulates it. Indeed, it must be emphasized that the prophecy that France, lost by a woman, would be saved by a maid, had no need of Isabeau: it was popular long before the queen was ever accused of losing the kingdom through the Treaty of Troyes.[31] Ultimately based on the Eva/Maria dichotomy, already recorded by Justin Martyr in the second century, the theme was common in poetry of the early fifteenth century, which focused on "the legitimacy of the monarchy, its present deplorable state, the aid to be bestowed upon it by a virgin, and the peace that will result," as Deborah Fraioli writes.[32] Fraioli offers many examples of individual poems of the early fifteenth century that treat the theme. None of these evoke Isabeau, implicitly or explicitly.[33] Cynthia Brown proposes that some of the illustrations of Alain Chartier's the *Livre de l'espérance* visualize the theme by showing the feeble male figures of the work, Entendement and the author, as being first weakened and then empowered by female personfications: they are both ru-

ined and raised again by women.[34] But Isabeau is not associated with the loss of the kingdom in these examples.

Of course, the absence of direct evidence does not prove that the Isabeau/Joan opposition never occurred to anyone or that they were not making it covertly. However, it is hard to make that case in the absence of evidence, especially given that the prophecy circulated well before it could have been associated with Isabeau, that is, before the Treaty of Troyes. In fact, some of the references to the prophecy that have long been assumed to point to Isabeau do not seem relevant to the queen at all. One scholar observes that after the Treaty of Troyes in 1420, "it was a commonplace prophecy that even as France had been lost by a woman, Isabeau de Bavière, it would be saved by a woman. The *Sibylla Francica* (1429) shows that this prophecy was current even in Germany."[35] And yet, when one reads the *Sibylla Francica,* composed by an anonymous German cleric in 1429, the words generally believed to apply to Isabeau are difficult to associate with the queen. We are told that "hoc regnum Franciae ruinam passum est ex superfluitate vitae et abundantia panis, propter unius mulieris speciem" (the kingdom of France underwent ruin from an excess of life and overabundance of bread, because of the beauty [or appearance] of one woman).[36] Would a cleric writing in 1429 ascribe France's downfall to the vision or beauty (*species*) of Isabeau of Bavaria? It is possible that the cleric is making a sly reference to the adultery rumor that may have begun to circulate by this point, assuming the queen to have been beautiful in her youth. But the idea that France was ruined by some kind of (jealous?) conflict over the queen does not conform to any other written references to her.

Nothing excludes the possibility that during the fifteenth century Isabeau and Joan of Arc were popularly opposed. And certainly there is no denying the currency of the formula in the modern imagination. However, written evidence of the opposition is relatively recent, more characteristic of modern scholarship like Françoise Barry's 1964 study of the institution of French queenship than of medieval chronicles or poetry. In contrast to the debauched Isabeau, writes Barry, Joan was "une enfant du peuple, n'ayant comme armes que sa foi et sa pureté" (a child of the people, possessing only her faith and her purity as arms), the savior not only of French unity, but of the French monarchy, as well.[37] For Barry, Isabeau was a vengeful traitor to France, as well as cowardly, divisive, opportunistic, and German. This Isabeau has served from the nineteenth century on as a construct against which to pose French identity. But for the fifteenth century, if the construct existed, it has

left no explicit trace. Certainly the impression left by some modern scholars, that Isabeau was commonly slotted into the prophecy that "even as France had been lost by a woman, it would be saved by a woman" is not supported by the evidence.

Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Developments

The circulation of the rumor of Charles VII's illegitimacy was thus the first step in Isabeau's postmortem vilification. However, this particular charge does not figure in the next important phase of the queen's black legend, result of the work of a variety of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century legal historians who read and redeployed her story to make different points about the fraught issue of female regency. Indeed, the promiscuity strand is absent from this phase of the legend's development, because scholars writing on female regency depended on chronicles and legal documents, neither of which charge her with adultery. Still, these sources, read from a perspective on law and violence that no longer accepted resorting to arms as a fundamental seigneurial right, permitted significant development of the legend in quite a different direction. For early modern readers already inclined to see women as fickle, the sources presented them with a queen whose primary characteristics seemed to be divisiveness and instability. Some, failing to correct for the Burgunidan bias in the complaints about Louis of Orleans and the queen in Pintoin's chronicle for 1405, discovered a political incompetent mismanaging the realm. Furthermore, the strong presence of powerful men in the documents—Louis of Orleans and Philip and Jean of Burgundy—prevented legal historians from recognizing the nature of Isabeau's particular role in the government. Overshadowed by these obstreperous figures, the queen was often overlooked. And yet, it is also important to note that certain legal historians, recognizing the unreliability of chroniclers in general, insised that the truth lay only in the ordinances, with their lack of adornment.

Thus two distinct Isabeaus emerge from the period, one discreet, the other riotous. To begin with the discreet Isabeau, legal historian Jean du Tillet, *greffier* at the Parlement of Paris and member of what has been called the historical school of that institution, demonstrates that at least certain writers understood that the material in chronicles must be handled cautiously. Charged with defending the king's prerogatives, Du Tillet (not to be confused with his younger brother of the same name who was Bishop of Brieux and then of Meaux, and who, like his brother, died in 1570) scoured histor-

ical documents to support his legal recommendations, which were based on customary rather than Roman law.[38]

An issue of concern for him was detemining the age of majority. In the pamphlet "Pour la Majorité du roi treschretien, contre les escrits des rebelles," Du Tillet argues for majority of the king at the end of the fourteenth year, concluding that the young king, François II, should be permitted to choose his own advisors.[39] Du Tillet supports his case with ordinances and charters, including the 1374 ordinance of Charles V. In determining what French legal tradition had set as the age of majority, he insists that only trustworthy historical witnesses to *droit coutumier*—charters, in other words—be consulted. He specifically warns against paying heed to chronicles:

> Ils sont les premiers ignorans qui ont donné foy d'histoire aux annales & chroniques de France: laquelle aiant eu tant d'actes dignes de memoire a esté infortunée & privée de suffisans historiens, fors quelques regnes particuliers en trop petit nombre, qui ont eu de personnes proches des princes & manians leurs affaires, qui en ont laissé des commentaires. [The most ignorant are those who have taken as history the annals and chronicles of France; this country with so many acts deserving of memory has been unfortunate to have been deprived of sufficient historians, except for the too few particular reigns where people close to the princes and responsible for their affairs have left some commentaries of their period.][40]

He continues, "Les escripts mis en lumiere mesmes traictans ce qui est advenu de nos jours, sont pleins de fables & remplis de nouvelles du palais." (The writings brought to light, even those about events from our own days, are full of fables and filled with gossip.)[41]

Du Tillet follows his own advice and largely ignores chroniclers. His only reference to the queen derived from a chronicler is one from Jean Chartier; he notes that she was badly treated by the English king, remarking, "Cette royne fut petitement entretenue de l'estat de sa maison par les Anglois, es mains desquels elle estoit, & porta fort patiemment ses afflictions" (This queen was kept in poor estate in her house by the English, in whose hands she was, and bore her afflictions very patiently).[42]

René Choppin, another legal historian of Du Tillet's circle born in Anjou in 1537, was a lawyer in the Parlement of Paris. Like Du Tillet, he makes no mention of salacious rumors attached to the queen. What is odd at first blush, however, is that he does not mention Isabeau at all in his discussion of female

regency. About the practice of female regency in general, he explains that it is common, writing, "Or combien que la femme ne soit habile & capable de de jouÿr du Domaine Royal, toutesfois il est souvent advenu que la Regence & gouvernement du Royaume a esté deferé aux Roynes, soit par le Roy, soit par le commun consentement & ordonnance des Estats" (Now, although a woman may not be suited to or capable of reigning over the royal domain, it has nonetheless often occurred that the regency and the government of the realm have gone to queens, either by the king, or by the common consent of the Estates General).[43] He then goes on to list several examples of such regents: Adela, wife of Louis VII; Blanche of Castile; Jeanne of Navarre for Philippe IV; and Anne of Brittany for Louis XII. He makes no mention of Isabeau.

The reason for this omission is unclear. Perhaps it is related to the fact that Choppin was working from ordinances. The queens he mentions were unambiguously appointed regents in the case of the deaths of their spouses by royal ordinance, even though some, like Jeanne of Navarre, wife of Philippe IV, never served as such.[44] In contrast, the ordinances relating to Isabeau's role never clearly assign her the role of regent. Indeed, Charles VI's most widely cited ordinances regarding regency were those abolishing it altogether, passed first in 1403 and then in 1407. About the latter, Choppin states that

> quelques années apres le mesme Roy [Charles VI] ordonna que l'aisné des enfants Roys seroit incontinent sacre & couronné Roy de quelque aage qu'il fust, & que durant son bas aage la Royne auroit la Regence & administration du Royaume, par lettres patentes du 25 Novembre 1407. Ce qui fut tres bien ordonne.
> [a few years later the same king ordered that the eldest of the king's children would be immediately anointed and crowned king, whatever age he was, and that during his minor years the queen would have regency and administration over the kingdom, by letters patent of November 25, 1407. This was a good order.][45]

It would have been Isabeau who would have "regence" and "administration du royaume" in this ordinance, a point that goes without mention by Choppin. Perhaps the omission can be explained by the fact that the very purpose of the ordinance is specifically to abolish the regency in the aftermath of the assassination of Louis of Orleans. Given that it was motivated in the first place by fear that one of the heir's powerful male relatives would seize control, "regency" in this case is a different thing from earlier examples, when

powerful regents had ruled in their own names. Here, Isabeau, incapable of usurping the throne because she was a woman, would look after the kingdom with the help of a council until the king came of age.

In the *Traité de la majorité de nos rois,* Pierre Dupuy (1582–1651) presents a sober and unembellished portrayal of Isabeau, but like Choppin, he does not accord her reign a role in the development of female regency.[46] Dupuy conscientiously reports the royal ordinances relative to regency passed by Charles VI. Like Choppin's, Dupuy's account does not focus on Isabeau's status as regent, drawing attention instead to the fact that the ordinances of 1403 and 1407 abolished the regency altogether. It is through this prism—that the queen was not a genuine regent in the dangerous old sense, but a different creature—that these two ordinances were viewed. Thus they were not considered relevant to the creation of female regency. Isabeau would reign *au nom de son fils*. The unruliness of Louis of Orleans is described in some detail (although the description is not accurate on some counts—for example, he was not given complete authority over the kingdom in 1402 as Dupuy claims, but just the authority to raise taxes north of the Loire), underlining the motivation for the ordinances abolishing the regency.

Other historians, like Bernard de Girard, Seigneur du Haillan (1535–1610), secretary of finances for the Duke of Anjou, incorporate material on the alliance of Louis and Isabeau gleaned from the chronicle of Pintoin but filter it through a misogynistic optic that sees women as inherently unstable and avaricious. He puts Isabeau in the thick of the fight for power, depicting her as vacillating and responsible for the ruin of the realm:

> Les affaires de ce jeune Roy & de son regne dés son commencement commencerent à se brouiller, qui font un prognostique d'un piteux regne, comme il fut, car il ne fut jamais que plein de divisions, de cruautez, de massacres, de vengeances, de perfidies, & de toutes desolations causees de l'ambition des grands, de la folie & imbecilité de ce Roy, des divisions des deux maisons d'Orleans & de Bourgogne, & des brouilleries, haines, & discordes semees entre elles par la Roine Elisabeth ou Ysabel de Baviere, femme dudit Roy, qui tantost se mettoit du costé de l'un contre l'autre, puis quittant celuy là, se bandoit contre celuy qu'elle avoit auparavant favorisé, & gouvernant ainsi les fantasies, passions, & humeurs feminines en ce Royaume, le mit à un pied de sa ruine.
> [The affairs of this young king and his realm were troubled from the very beginning of his reign, which boded ill for the reign, which was always

rent with division, cruelty, massacres, vengeance, perfidy, and all sorts of disasters caused by the ambitions of the powerful, and the insanity of the king, the strife between the two houses of Orleans and Burgundy, and the trouble, hatred, and discord sown between them by the queen Elisabeth or Isabeau of Bavaria, wife of the said king, who sometimes took one side against the other, and then leaving one for the other, banded against the one that she had earlier favored, and the fanstasies, passions, and feminine humors governing thus in the realm, she brought it to the brink of ruin.][47]

Isabeau was "hautaine, superbe, pompeuse, vindicative, & malicieuse" (haughty, condescending, pompous, vindicative, and ruseful) and she "apporta en France le luxe des habillemens, & des pierries, & qui par ses menees, & par sa malice fut cause de plusieurs grands maux en France (brought to France luxury in the form of clothes and jewels, and by her doing and her malice was the cause of many of the great woes of France).[48] (Here it is clear that he has been reading Pintoin, 3:268.) According to the Seigneur du Haillan, when Charles first became mad, the Estates General convened to assign the Duchess of Burgundy, another woman who was "superbe & hautaine," to Isabeau as her first assistant and principal companion. (Here it is clear that he has been reading Froissart, 15:54.) The Duchess of Burgundy was so unyielding regarding anything having to do with the queen of France that no one could speak to Isabeau without her permission.[49] Although she despised the Duchess of Burgundy for this stranglehold, Isabeau tolerated her because husband of the duchess, Philip of Burgundy, was the head of the government. As soon as Philip died, Isabeau was free to transfer her allegiance from the House of Burgundy to the House of Orleans. Not only this: "Elle vouloit executer la vengeance si long temps couvee dedans sa test malicieuse (coustume propre aux femmes qui espient le temps & l'occasion de se venger d'une injure longuement dissimulée)." (She wanted to exercise the vengeance that had brewed so long in her malicious head [a custom particular to women, who wait for the time and occasion to avenge themselves of a long-dissimulated injury].)[50]

As for the regency during the king's absences, the Seigneur du Haillan writes that earlier authors disagree about who was in charge. A council met to settle the rivalry between the dukes, but as for who took control of the government, disagreement exists, he notes. Some authors say that Isabeau reigned with the princes, while others do not include her in the government.[51]

The unflattering picture of the vacillating Isabeau that arises from his reading is undoubtedly related to the shift in perspective on the right of the nobility to feud. Between the time of Isabeau and the Seigneur du Haillan, the right to violence had begun to be monopolized and that "monopoly was built on the suppression of the noble feud by central governments in the sixteenth century."[52] Not that feuding vanished. But for the Seigneur du Haillan it would have been viewed as illegal. He thus reads Isabeau's activity as participation in internal conflicts in which she had no business involving herself. For the same reason he understands her activity as evidence of her arrogance.

In his chapter of *Franco-Gallia* dealing with why women are prohibited from ruling, François Hotman briefly discusses the case of Isabeau and Charles VI.[52] Given the attitude toward women in power that he demonstrates, one assumes that he would have been happy to excoriate the queen had he possessed the ammunition: just before turning to Isabeau, he denounces the venerable Blanche of Castile, proclaiming that while she may be popular among many, she was in fact such a bully that she terrorized her son, Saint Louis. Hotman says nothing about Isabeau's early regency work, discussing only the Troyes government of 1417. However, his source being Monstrelet, as he tells us himself, he can find nothing very bad to say about the queen.

> Prius enim quam Concilii auctoritate Regni procuratio certis ac delectis viris mandari posset, multae ab hominibus ambitiosis contentiones exortae sunt. Sexies denique controversiae renovatae, sexies interpositis pactionibus sedatae sunt. Tandem Isabella Parisiis exacta, Carnutum se recepit. Ibi Philippum Morvillerium veteratorem nacta, Senatum sibi, et Praetorem, et Cancellarium Morvillerium illum instituit, eiusdemque consilio Typum regium (quod Cancellariae sigillum vulgo appellant) insculpi iussit, suamque in eo imaginem demissis brachiis imprimi, cum in diplomatibus hac praefatione uteretur: "Isabella Dei gratia Regina Franciae, quae propter incommodam Regis valetudinem Regni procurationem obtinet."
>
> [Before the government of the kingdom could be vested by the authority of the council in tried and chosen men, many disputes had been instigated by ambitious men. On six occasions these quarrels flared up, and six times they were settled by agreement. Finally Isabella was driven out of Paris and proceded to Chartres. There she discovered a crafty fellow

named Philippe de Morvilliers and set up a parlement for herself with a president and Morvilliers as chancellor. On his advice she ordered a royal seal (commonly called the chancery seal) to be engraved, and upon it to be depicted an image of herself with arms folded in prayer. She used the following preface on official documents: "Isabella by the grace of God Queen of France, who by reason of the King's ill-health exercises the government of the kingdom."][54]

Up until this point Hotman's story is more or less accurate, following Monstrelet. But as he continues, it becomes apparent that he has read something out of order, for as he tells it, Isabeau is sent to Tours *after* she sets up her parallel government in Troyes. And as he describes the misplaced exile to Tours, his misogyny gets the best of him and he throws in a particularly insulting description of the queen being held by her custodians, a wildly distorted version of Monstrelet, who reports that Isabeau was closely guarded: "Quatuorque illi tutores attributi, qui belluam illam indomitam domi continerent, viderentque ne quam rem agere, ac ne literam quidem ullam sine ipsorum permissu scribere posset." (Four custodians were appointed to keep that wild beast in her lodgings and to see that she was able to do nothing, not so much as to write a letter without their leave.)[55]

Questions of female regency were especially ugent in the seventeenth century, which saw the controversial reigns of Marie de Médicis for her son, Louis XIII, and Anne of Austria for Louis XIV. *Le Sceptre de France en quenouille par les régences des reynes* of 1650 by Claude Du Bosc de Montandré betrays the ambivalence with which many regarded the institution. The work is a copy of *La Regence des reynes en Frances ou les regentes* by Robert Luyt with the difference that the treatise of Du Bosc de Montandré, which includes a preface rendering it highly unflattering to Queen Anne, develops the argument for Salic Law.[56] The result is a conflicted argument. On the one hand, the text states:

Remarque est que les Reynes ont esté ordinairement preferées en ce choix, à tous les Princes du Sang, & aux autres Seigneurs Ecclesiastiques ou seculiers, par cette mesme raison, que l'on ne peut pas craindre qu'elles usurpent la Couronne à la succession de laquelle elles sont incapables par la Loy fondamentale de cette Monarchie; & que d'ailleurs la nature leur donne un droict inviolable à la Tutele de leurs enfans, ou à la conduite de leurs jeunes freres.
[It is to be noted that queens have normally been preferred in this choice

to all the other princes of the blood and to other ecclesiastical or secular lords for the same reason, that is, that there is no fear that they will usurp the crown from the succession for which they are ineligible by the fundamental law (Salic Law) of this Monarchy; and that in addition nature gives tham an inviolable right to guardianship over their children, or their young brothers.][57]

On the other, it continues:

> Mais cette loy qui devoit apporter un remede à tant de desordres dans l'estat François, n'a servy que de sujet pour les augmenter, & en faire naistre de nouveaux, ainsi qu'on peut voir dans tout cét ouvrage, les factions, les guerres civiles, les divisions, les ravages, les incendies, les pillages, les violements, les horribles seignées, & la perte de tant de millions d'ames, en ont esté les funestes suittes, qui ne sont que trop connuës de nostre temps.
> [But this law that is meant to remedy the problems in the French state has only served to exacerbate them and give birth to new ones, as we can see in this work in the factions, civil wars, division, ravages, fires, pillages, rapes, bloodletting, and the loss of so many millions of souls, which have been the funereal results, which are only too well known during our own times.][58]

Isabeau receives no criticism in the section on the development of female regency; rather the focus is on the unruly behavior of the royal uncles and the misery their rivalries caused. However, the rumors about Isabeau's personal behavior are mentioned when the author contemplates what might have motivated Isabeau to break with her son, Charles VII. Was it the scandal caused by her liaison with Louis Bosredon, Isabeau's *maître d'hôtel,* arrested as we saw in chapter one by the Armagnacs in 1416 on the pretext that her court was behaving scandalously? Or was it her hatred of her son's favorite, the Count of Armagnac?

> Il n'est pas aysé de dire quel fut le veritable sujet de la rupture de la Reyne Isabeau avec Charles le Dauphin son fils. Les uns l'attribuent au scandale des amours avec un jeune Seigneur nommé Louis Bourdillon, les autres à une secrette aversion qu'elle avoit tousjours eue contre Charles . . . Quelques-uns à la bisarrerie de son esprit aussi changeant à aymer ce qu'elle avoit un peu auparavant hay, comme il esoit leger à hayr ce qu'elle avoit autrefois uniqumenet aymé. D'autres à la hayne ir-

reconciliable du Connestable d'Armagnac, favory de Charles, & ennemy de cette Princesse.

[It is not easy to say what the real reason for the rupture between the queen Isabeau and Charles, the dauphin, her son was. Some attribute it to love scandals with a young lord named Louis Bosredon, some to a secret aversion she had toward Charles. . . . Some attribute it to the fickleness of her spirit, which was so changeable that she could love what she had recently hated, and easily hate what she had used to love. Others attributed it to her irreconcilable hatred for the *Connétable* of Armagnac, favorite of Charles and enemy of this Princess.][59]

It is most frequently in terms of regency that Isabeau is mentioned during these centuries, for she was often present in the histories of the kings of France that began to proliferate in the sixteenth century in response to an increasingly urgent desire to analyze and consolidate the laws associated with the monarchy. However, her regency is not considered key in the development of female regency in these works. Moreover, regarding her through a misogynistic optic, some writers contribute to the queen's black legend by embellishing the story of her that they found in the chronicles dating from Isabeau's lifetime and misreading her participation in the Armagnac-Burgundian feud, a conflict they can only view as noxious.

The Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

The sober strand of history passed on by some sixteenth- and seventeenth-century historians of law lost out definitively in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to the wildly entertaining stories of an adulterous, luxurious, meddlesome, scheming, and spendthrift queen. These stories were passed on by many historians, including nineteenth-century historians like Michelet, and, in the first years of the twentieth century, Marcel Thibault, who purports to be regarding the evidence surrounding the queen objectively, but nonetheless incorporates her popular image into a larger narrative of French nationalism. The picture of Isabeau transmitted in these histories was reinforced by the school histories circulating widely during the nineteenth century as well as the fiction of Dumas père whose *Isabel de Bavière* of 1835 portrays the queen at her most scandalous.

Correspondance between Michael Huber, language teacher and translator of Bavarian origins living in Paris in 1764, and the Bayerische Akademie der

Wissenschaften suggests that the black legend of Isabeau had already left the sober vision of the queen in its wake by that time. Referring to Isabeau's critics, Huber writes: "Meine Heldin wird durch dieselben grausam verschrien, und sie stimmen alle überein, dass Isabelle ein Ungeheuer gewesen ist." (My heroine is terribly defamed by them, and they all agree that Isabelle was a monster.)[60] Recognizing the authors' prejudice against the queen, Huber notes that "doch aus den Gründen, die sie anführen, ersieht man ihre Parteylichkeit" (but from the reasons that they give, one can see their bias)." Although he intended to write an objective history of the queen, based on the primary sources to which he had access in Paris, he seems to have abandoned the task, for no such history exists.

Unfortunately, we cannot know exactly what was included in the stories circulating about Isabeau that disturbed Huber. A good guess might be that the stories were influenced by Moreau de Mautour's discovery in 1727 of the charter of the Cour amoureuse of the court of Charles VI. Undoubtedly nourished by the promiscuity tale and the legend of the scheming Isabeau, Moreau de Mautour's reflections on the poetic "love court" culminate with this: "On sçait qu'un pareil établissement étoit fort du gout de la cour de Charles VI et qu'Isabeau de Bavière, sa femme, qui avoit introduit le luxe et la magnificence, avoit aussi contribué à y introduire la galanterie." (We know that such an institution was much to the taste of the court of Charles VI and that Isabeau of Bavaria, his wife, who had introduced luxury and magnificence, also contributed to introducing gallantry there.)[61] In a similar vein, Pierre Jean Baptiste Le Grand d'Aussy, editor of Old French fabliaux, opined in the introduction to his edition: "La Court amoureuse fut un des fruits qu'enfanta l'esprit de frivolité répandu par la scandaleuse reine Isabeau. Heureuse au moins la France, si elle n'avoit que ce reproche à lui faire!" (The Cour amoureuse was one of the fruits produced by the spirit of frivolity spread by the scandalous queen Isabeau. France would be lucky if this was the only thing it had to reproach her of!)[62]

But the legend receives a particularly lurid and influential retelling in the best-selling *Crimes des Reines de France depuis le commencement de la monarchie jusqu'à Marie-Antoinette,* composed by Louise de Keralio (1758–1822) in 1791.[63] Keralio reads earlier queens as "types" for Marie-Antoinette, and in her rendition, Isabeau's black legend attains its full expression in a violent attack on the French royalty in general and queens in particular. Isabeau's story is recounted just after that of Blanche of Castile, whom Keralio dislikes just as much as she does Isabeau, although for different reasons. Blanche

is a hypocritical religious fanatic and domineering mother: "L'esprit de domination ne pouvoit abandonner cette femme qu'avec la vie, et Saint Louis étoit trop bigot and trop soumis pour résister à sa volonté." (The spirit of domination could leave this woman only with her life itself, and Saint Louis was too much of a bigot and too submissive to resist her wishes.)[64]

Isabeau, taking her place after Blanche, represents evil of another variety. The tenor of the depiction is evident in this introduction to Isabeau's queenship:

> A tant d'horreurs, à celles de la guerre générale qui enveloppoit tous les pays de l'Europe, il manquoit en France la main d'une femme pour augmenter la dissention, et répandre un poison plus subtil dans toutes les ames. Isabeau élévée par les furies pour consommer la ruine de l'état, et le vendre aux ennemis; Isabeau de Bavière parut, et son mariage célébré à Amiens, le 17 juillet 1385, seroit regardé comme l'époque la plus effrayante de nos annales, si le 16 mai 1771, nous n'avions pas vu former des liens plus funestes encore, sous des auspcies plus sinistres, présage trop vrai de tous les maux que trainoit avec elle une nouvelle fille d'Achab et de Jésabel.
> [Among so many horrors, those of the war in general that enveloped all the countries of Europe, there was missing only the hand of a woman to augment dissension and spread a more subtle poison in souls. Isabeau was raised by the furies to bring about the ruin of the state and to sell it to its enemies; Isabeau of Bavaria appeared, and her marriage, celebrated in Amiens on July 17, 1385, would be regarded as the most horrifying moment in the annals of our history, if on May 16, 1771, we hadn't seen the formation of a yet more mournful time, under even more sinister auspices, an omen too true of all the woes that a new daughter of Ahab and Jezebel would bring with her.][65]

Madame de Keralio recounts with horror the fantastic sums spent for Isabeau's coronation, for her feasts, for her illuminated palaces. According to Keralio, Isabeau's greed is also the cause of her illegitimate political activity. "La reine étoit, comme Antoinette," she writes,

> violente, avare, incapable de modération dans ses désirs, tourmentée du désir de régner; mais Antoinette n'a pas eu besoin, comme Isabeau, d'embrasser tour-à-tour plusieurs partis différens, et de tenir la balance entre divers chefs, toujours prêts à s'entr'égorger. Les temps ont seuls été la

cause des différences qui se trouvent dans le vie de ces deux femmes; mais dans l'atrocité de leur conduite elle font également frémir d'horreur."

[The queen was, like Antoinette, violent, greedy, incapable of moderation in her desire, tormented by the desire to reign; but Antoinette didn't need, like Isabeau, to embrace different parties, to maintain balance between different leaders, all ready to slit each others' throats. Only the times are responsible for the differences we find in the lives of these two women but in the atrocity of their conduct they arouse shivers of horror in equal measure.][66]

Louis of Orleans in this retelling becomes the avatar of the Count of Artois. He enjoys a passionate affair not only with Isabeau, but with Marguerite, Duchess of Burgundy. And Isabeau's treachery to the nation appears now as a central argument against her. Fully developed for the first time here, it will become a primary reason for the contempt meted out to her by nineteenth-century historians.

This Isabeau/Marie-Antoinette is nuanced by the Marquis de Sade, who, submitting the queen to his ideology of gallantry, gives her rapaciousness a cold and calculating valence, in contrast with the uncontrollable emotionalism described with such gusto by Madame de Keralio. In his account, Isabeau is not the excessive harpy of Keralio's story, but a woman who carefully manages her greed for maximum gratification. She is, in the words of Sade, an icy "Prototype of Robespierre" characterized by her "libertine coldness."

Sade's story, although completed in September 1813, was not published until 1953, and therefore it could not have influenced nineteeth-century historians to any great degree.[67] But interesting for modern readers, he admits to being perfectly aware that the charges against the queen are without ground. One can imagine his winking as he admits in the introduction to his book that no mention of the queen's shocking behavior can be found in contemporary chronicles. Instead, he scolds fifteenth-century chroniclers for failing to report the story of the adulterous queen, a story Sade claims to have found in two "confessions" formerly held in Dijon, subsequently (and conveniently) destroyed by Revolutionaries. But the truths (*vérités*) contained within these confessions are so obvious, the Marquis continues, that "[elles] n'avaient même pas besoin pour convaincre des preuves que nous fournissons" ([they] do not even require the proof that we provide). As for the

chroniclers, he reproaches them: "Faute d'être guidé par vous, il faut que le malheureux lecteur fasse les plus grands efforts pour démêler les vérités que vous n'avez pas le courage de lui dire." (Unguided by you, the poor reader must make a great effort to unravel the truths that you did not have the courage to tell him.)[68]

The works of Madame de Keralio and the Marquis de Sade of course functioned as critiques against the royalty of the late eighteenth century, and in an allegorical sense they undoubtedly had merit. These were works of rhetoric, not histories, and they had no interest in considering the circumstances that produced the monarchical system within which Isabeau existed. Jules Michelet, too, incorporated the story of Isabeau into his history of France for rhetorical purposes, admitting that the story of a liaison between the queen and her brother-in-law had no historical basis. In the nineteen-volume *Histoire de France,* published for the first time in 1867, Isabeau is not an individual, but a figure for the woes of France, the prize in a struggle for power. Analyzing historical personages as embodiments of historical tendencies, Michelet depicts the Armagnac-Burgundian feud as a sort of contagion. What originates as a personal struggle between two destructive personality traits, pride and desire, embodied in Charles VI, finishes by spreading like a disease to an ever-expanding group. First the dukes are affected and finally their factions. Michelet writes of Charles VI:

> Il y a dans la personne humaine deux personnes, deux ennemis qui guerroient à nos dépens, jusqu'à ce que la mort y mette ordre. Ces deux ennemis, l'orgueil et le désir, nous les avons vus aux prises dans cette pauvre âme de roi. L'un a prévalu d'abord, puis l'autre; puis, dans ce long combat, cette âme s'est éclipsée, et il n'y a plus eu où combattre. La guerre finie dans le roi, elle éclate dans le royaume; les deux principes vont agir en deux hommes et deux factions, jusqu'à ce que cette guerre ait produit son acte frénétique: le meurtre; jusqu'à ce que, les deux homes ayant été tués l'un par l'autre, les deux factions, pour se tuer, s'accordent à tuer la France.
>
> [In the human being, there are two people, two enemies warring to our detriment, until death restores order. These two enemies, pride and desire, can be seen at war in that poor soul of the king. Initially one takes the upper hand, then, the other; then, in the midst of the long combat, the soul is eclipsed, and there is no place left to fight. Finished within the king, the war erupted in the kingdom; the two principles were then rep-

resented by two men and two factions, until the war produced its most frenetic act: murder; until the two men, having been killed by each other, agreed to kill France.][69]

"Cela dit, au fond tout est dit" (That said, everything is said), Michelet concludes.

The vice of pride spread to Jean sans Peur, while desire took root in Louis of Orleans. But as far as Michelet is concerned, this desire was not a negative trait. On the contrary, France loved the cupidinous Louis, because she saw herself in him:

> Pour la première fois, au sortir du roide et gothique Moyen Age, elle se vit ce qu'elle est, mobilité, elegance légère. . . . Elle aimait cette jolie tête qui tournait celle des femmes; elle aimait cet esprit hardi qui déconcertait les docteurs: c'était plaisir de voir les vieilles barbes de l'Université, au milieu de leurs lourdes harangues, se troubler à ses vives saillies et balbutier. . . . L'Eglise était faible pour cet aimable prince; elle lui passait bien des choses; il n'y avait pas moyen d'être sévère avec cet enfant gâté de la nature et de la grace.
> [For the first time, emerging from the rigid and gothic Middle Ages, she saw herself for what she was: mobility, light elegance, childlike fantasy. . . . She loved this pretty head that turned those of women; she loved the hardy intelligence that disconcerted the doctors: it was a pleasure to see the old beards of the university, in the midst of their heavy harangues, bothered and speechless from his pointed sallies. . . . The Church had a soft spot for this amiable prince; she allowed him many things; one could not be severe with this child spoiled by nature and grace.][70]

The object of Louis' most ardent desire is Isabeau, queen, his brother's wife, figure for the kingdom. Did the real Louis become the real Isabeau's lover, Michelet wonders? There is no evidence of it, he admits. Still, the idea "n'est pas improbable. Ce qui est sûr, c'est qu'il semblait fort uni avec Isabeau au conseil et dans les affaires; une si étroite alliance d'un jeune homme trop gallant avec une jeune femme qui se trouvait comme veuve du vivant de son mari, n'était rien moins qu'édifiante." (is not improbable. What is sure is that is he seemed strongly allied with Isabeau on the council and in business of the realm; such a firm alliance between a too gallant young man and a young woman who happened to be the widow of a living husband speaks for

itself.)[71] He concludes, "Maître de la reine, il semblait vouloir l'être du royaume" (Master of the queen, he seemed to want to be of the realm).[72] It is quite simply irrelevant for Michelet whether Louis and Isabeau were lovers in reality, because his entire reading of their lives is allegorical. They do not represent human beings, but the "spirit" of their times.

However, a problem arose when works like those of Madame de Keralio and Michelet were read as indictments of the historical Isabeau rather than as indictments of the entire system of royalty or as commentaries on the spirit of Isabeau's time. Many historians passed on the story of the debauched Isabeau to French schoolchildren; only a few can be mentioned here. Perhaps the most influential was Michelet's teacher, François Guizot (1787–1874), whose highly popular history of France, *L'Histoire de France depuis les temps les plus reculés jusqu'en 1789 racontée à mes petits-enfants,* which came out a few years after Michelet's own history, exemplifies the damage wrought by literal readings of works that were never intended as histories. Like his pupil, Guizot develops the story of Isabeau's amorous life but for different reasons. In his story, Louis is charming and frivolous, accomplice of the queen, who wields a good deal of influence with the king. Different from Michelet's version, this is a genuine criticism of a certain type of morality.

> Entre la reine Isabeau de Bavière et le duc d'Orléans, frère du roi, une intimité s'établit qui, dans la ville et parmi les honnêtes gens, choquait les moins sévères; sans doute par l'influence de la reine, Charles VI se décida brusquement, en 1402, à remettre au duc d'Orléans l'entier gouvernement du royaume et le droit de le suppléer en tout durant les accès de sa maladie. . . . [Le duc d'Orléans] était élégant, affable, léger, facile; il avait pour partisans, à la cour, tous ceux qui partageaient ses goûts et ses moeurs plus que frivoles, et son jugement politique ne valait pas mieux que ses moeurs; dès qu'il fut investi du pouvoir, il en abusa étrangement; il ordonna sur le clergé comme sur le peuple, la levée d'une taille énorme, et l'usage qu'il faisait de l'argent agravait encore la colère publique. [Between the queen Isabeau of Bavaria and the Duke of Orleans, brother of the king, an intimacy grew up, which, in the city and among decent people shocked the least severe; undoubtedly, by the influence of the queen, Charles VI decided suddenly to hand over the entire government of the realm to the Duke of Orleans and the right to replace him during his periods of illness. . . . [The Duke of Orleans] was elegant, affable, light, easy; his partisans at court were all those who shared his tastes and

frivolous values, and his political judgment was worth no more than his morals; as soon as he was invested with power, he abused it bizarrely; he levied an enormous tax upon the clergy and the people, and the use he made of this money aggravated public anger even more.][73]

The queen's salacious activity, according to Guizot's account, did not come to an end with the assassation of Louis. Guizot reports the story of Louis Bosredon:

Elle menait d'ailleurs à Vincennes une vie scandaleusement licencieuse; un de ses favoris, Louis de Bosredon, gentilhomme d'Auvergne et son maître d'hôtel, rencontrant Charles VI un jour sur la route, le salua légèrement et poursuivit en hâte son chemin. Charles VI en parut choqué. Le comte d'Armagnac saisit l'occasion; non-seulement il fomenta l'humeur du roi, mais il entretint la rumeur de tous les désordres qui se passaient autour de la reine, et dont Louis de Bosredon était, disait-on, en ce moment, le principal complice.
[In addition, she led a scandalously licentious life at Vincennes; one of her favorites, Louis de Bosredon, gentleman from Auvergne and her *maître d'hôtel,* meeting Charles VI one day on the road, saluted him casually and stuck to his path. Charles VI seemed to be shocked. The Count of Armagnac seized the occasion; not only did he foment the bad humor of the king, but he fuelled rumors of the all the disorders surrounding the queen, and in which Louis de Bosredon was, so it was said, the principal accomplice at the moment.][74]

Henri Martin's *Histoire de France populaire depuis les temps les plus reculés jusqu'à nos jours,* published in the same year as Michelet's history, accepts the same series of metaphors as literal truths. He writes that Isabeau "n'avait de goût que pour les futilités et pour la bonne chère, et mettait sa gloire à donner l'exemple des modes les plus extravagantes" (The queen had a taste for nothing except futilities and frivolities and made her name by setting an example for the most extravagant fashions).[75] Moreover, the queen submitted herself entirely to the will of the Duke of Orleans, whom rumor accused of an incestuous liaison, and by whom it was said that the queen and her husband were bewitched. Martin, however, dismisses these accusations of magic; Louis's handsome face and beautiful language were sufficient to explain his influence over the women of this dissolute court.[76]

In Martin, the Treaty of Troyes story is formulated according to a line

that has become traditional, that Isabeau sold the kingdom for cash. "Comme cela s'était fait au nom du dauphin Charles, Isabeau, qui aimait son argent plus que toute chose, prit son fils en haine et ne lui pardonna point." (As it was being done in the name of the dauphin Charles, Isabeau, who loved her money more than anything, decided that she hated her son and would not pardon him.)[77] He also notes contemptuously that in disinheriting Charles, she revoked "la loi qui interdisait aux femmes de succéder à la couronne de France" (the law that prohibited women from succeeding to the crown of France).[78] This is of course was not true; Salic Law was not yet definitive in 1420, although it was observed from time to time that women in France did not inherit the throne. Moreover, Henry V was named Charles VI's heir by adoption. Catherine, daughter of Charles VI and Isabeau, was married to Henry, but there was never any question of her ruling.

The work of academic Alfred Coville (1860–1942), historian trained at the Ecoles des Chartes and *agrégé* in history at the Sorbonne, is regarded as scholarly as opposed to the more popular histories I have just described. Yet despite his extensive, at the time groundbreaking, and still influential research on such important topics as the Cabochian revolt, his assessment of Isabeau is indistinguishable from those of popular historians. His misapprehensions, which arise quite clearly from his too literal readings of Pintoin, were undoubtedly colored by popular imaginative accounts of the queen. "Que penser et que croire?" he ponders.

> Au fond, c'était un esprit léger, aimant le luxe, la parure et les plaisirs; elle n'était point faite pour soigner un malade; elle aimait ses enfants, les gardait auprès d'elle, à Saint-Pol, à l'hôtel Barbette, à Vincennes, etc., mais oubliait trop souvent de leur donner les soins et les caresses d'une mère, même de les voir.
> [What to think and what to believe? At heart, she was a lightweight, loving luxury, jewels, and pleasure; she was not made to care for a sick man; she loved her children, keeping them next to her, at Saint-Pol, the Hôtel Barbette, at Vincennes, etc., but she forgot too often to give them the care and caresses of a mother, even to see them.][79]

Coville's great obsession regarding the queen was her cupidity, a complaint that continues to influence recent French references to the queen. Failing to take into account the pervasiveness of the literary genre that complains of the court as a place of wastefulness and, more seriously, singling Isabeau out for a type of criticism that could be applied to virtually everyone associ-

ated with the court until the end of the ancien régime, Coville invented a woman who taxed her people without mercy to keep herself in jewels.

> Elle tourmentait sans cesse le roi et les gouverneurs des finances de ses demandes et de ses besoins. . . . A tout instant elle envoie presser les receveurs des aides qui, par tout le royaume, doivent lui fournir ces sommes. Et tout cela pour faire vivre un hôtel somptueux, pour acquitter les dettes de son frère le duc Louis de Bavière, pour payer des ménestrelles du pays d'Espagne, pour entretenir des animaux de toutes sortes, tourterelles, cygnes, léopards, singes, etc., pour inaugurer des modes nouvelles.
> [She ceaselessly tormented the king and governors of the finances with her demands and needs. . . . Each second she harassed her tax collectors, who, throughout the realm, had to furnish her sums. And all of that to keep up a sumptuous household, to pay off the debts of her brother Louis of Bavaria, to pay minstrels from Spain, for the upkeep of exotic animals of all sorts, turtle doves, swans, leopards, monkeys, etc., to start new fashions.][80]

As for the adulterous liaison with Louis of Orleans, Coville is undecided. But, he notes, the most serious argument in its favor is the passage about the queen and Louis in the allegorical justification of the assassination of Louis in the work referred to above, the *Pastoralet*.[81] Coville, like many, mistakes the allegorical level of a story for the truth, assuming that the liaison between a shepherd and shepherdess recounted on the allegorical level of the *Pastoralet* can be read as factual. He also takes up the complaint that Isabeau failed in her duty to prevent the Armagnac-Burgundian war. She was simply too partial to the Duke of Orleans. As evidence he cites the fact that she signed treaties at different times with different parties. Lacking the frameworks developed over recent decades for comprehending how violence was maintained and contained in medieval Europe, Coville was unable to see anything in Isabeau's actions but feminine fickleness. Unfortunately, this view prevails even now that the viciousness and tenacity of the feud between Orleanists (later the Armangnacs) and the Burgundians can be shown to be typical according to modern theories on violence.

Whereas Michelet stressed the festive and brilliant aspect of the court, inserting Isabeau, not entirely disapprovingly, into a narrative of extravagant living, Marcel Thibault's *Isabeau de Bavière: Reine de France* of 1903 excoriates the queen's extravagance along with her inability to keep her husband

on the straight and narrow path. Although Thibault's narrative was written in the first years of the twentieth century, I will discuss it as the culmination of the legend's eighteenth- and nineteenth-century development. It must be acknowledged that Thibault's work is invaluable for the rich assortment of documentary evidence it brings to bear on the queen's biography. However, his analyses are marred by his assumptions about women, the popular image of Isabeau, and anti-German sentiment. He claims that his narrative is objective, positioning himself in opposition to "les récits fantaisistes de conteurs ou de romanciers qui ne citent point leurs sources, et pour cause" (the fantastical narratives of storytellers and romance writers who do not cite their sources with good reason). He then goes on to reproduce many aspects of the queen's black legend. We find in Thibault's account the extravagant queen seeking thrills and selfishly failing to keep a tight rein on Charles:

> Elle ne tente rien pour arrêter Charles VI, entraîné sur la pente fatale des plaisirs. Quand elle n'accomplit pas quelque pèlerinage, ou que ses couches ne la contraignent pas au repos, elle vit comme dans un tourbillon d'amusements folâtres, de splendides réjouissances. Et, pendant que le Roi gaspille ses forces, compromet sa dignité, se gâte l'intelligence, elle-même s'expose, par des fatigues immodérées, à ne donner au Royaume que des enfants chétifs.
> [She did not try to stop Charles VI, engaged in a downward spiral of pleasures. When she was not off on some pilgrimage, or confined to bed because of childbearing, she lived in a whirlwind of insane amusements and splendid celebrations. And while the king wasted his strength, compromised his dignity, ruined his intelligence, she, because of her immoderate lifestyle, produced for the kingdom only sickly babies.][82]

Pintoin and Froissart let us think that Isabeau was passive, asserts Thibault. But this was not the case; in fact, she was harboring a great ambition: to enrich herself.[83] Not surprisingly, in Thibault's version, Isabeau has no concern for the financial woes of the kingdom.

> Isabeau semble n'avoir usé de son autorité dans les questions de finances que pour faire aboutir certaines combinaisons profitables aux siens et à elle-même. Insouciante des vrais intérêts du Royaume, incapable de prendre l'initiative des réformes urgentes, non seulement elle ne fit rien pour enrayer les dépenses excessives, mais elle dilapida les revenus des impôts.
> [Isabeau seems to have used her authority in the area of finance only to

bring about certain schemes profitable to her family and her friends. Indifferent to the real interests of the kingdom, incapable of taking the initiative in urgent reforms, not only did she do nothing to rein in excessives spending, but she wasted tax revenues.][84]

Besides her greed, her lack of political acumen is her most striking quality in Thibault's account. He characterizes her as only vaguely aware of the threat to the throne posed by the king's relatives. In reference to her mediation of 1401 he wonders, "Est-ce qu'elle sentait confusément que la couronne de France était menacée? Quel que soit le motif qui la guida, elle maintint la balance égale entre les deux ducs, et, résultat inattendu, sa tactique se trouva servir surtout ses propres intérêts." (Did she confusedly sense that the crown of France was under threat? Whatever the motive that guided her, she maintained a balance between the dukes, and, unexpected result, her tactic turned out to serve her own interests.)[85] And yet despite the lack of political skill that Thibault attributes to the queen, he sees her power as vast. Regarding the royal ordinance of April 24, 1403, he writes that "des lettres royales conféraient à Isabeau l'autorité suprême" (some royal letters conferred supreme authority upon Isabeau).[86]

As for the adultery rumor, Thibault believes in it, citing, like Coville, the *Pastoralet* as evidence.[87] In this area she is motivated not only by her sensuality, however, but by her lust for power, using sex as a political weapon. It is not unlikely, he writes, "qu'Isabeau, dégagée de tous scrupules conjugaux, et Louis, à qui aucune conquête ne paraissait impossible, aient pensé, chacun de son côté et en même temps, à se rendre maître de son antagoniste par la séduction" (that Isabeau free of any conjugal scruples, and Louis, to whom no conquest seemed impossible, might have decided, each on his own side and at the same time, to master his enemy through seduction).[88] And in what seems like an act of historical bad faith, after he has insisted that his narrative will be based only on contemporary documents, Thibault announces that "si l'on croit certains témoignages de contemporains, la Reine aurait aimé le duc d'Orléans" (if we believed certain contemporary witnesses, the queen loved the Duke of Orleans).[89] But he fails to cite any of these witnesses. Not that he could; none existed.

But perhaps most interesting is the vehemence with which Thibault denounces Isabeau's sympathy for the Germans. He describes the queen as a sort of collaborator, to the detriment of her adopted country, but capable of concealing her true agenda: "toutes ses aptitudes à l'intrigue, toute l'activité

dont elle était capable, toute son influence, encore occulte alors, furent mises au service de la Maison de Bavière dont elle rêvait de restaurer la grandeur" (all of her aptitude for intrigue, all of the activity of which she was capable, all of her influence, still hidden at that time, was put to the service of the House of Bavaria, whose grandeur she dreamed of restoring).[90] Thibault employs the language of conspiracy to bolster his claims; although the queen never became fully French, she was capable of dissimulation, which she assumed to her advantage: "elle s'était assismilé tous les dehors, toutes les apparences qui convenaient à son rôle sur la scène française; mais au fond, elle restait allemande" (she assimilated outwardly, taking on the appearance appropriate to her role on the French scene; but at heart, she remained German). The emphasis on the queen's lack of transparency recalls the rhetoric of the denunciations of Marie-Antoinette.[91] This German-speaking queen was similarly accused of a treachery that she concealed behind an impenetrable surface. Isabeau's opaqueness, he continues, explains the dearth of references to her among contemporary chroniclers. They simply could not pierce the barrier created by her foreignness, and thus they remained silent about her. According to Thibault, "leur observation ne pouvait pas facilment démêler les goûts et les sentiments de cette étrangère" (their observation could not easily untangle the tastes and feelings of this foreigner).[92]

Conclusion

Defenses of Isabeau exist. I have already mentioned Paul Bonenfant's balanced assessement of the queen and Heidrunn Kimm's 1969 monograph exonerating the queen of the debaucheries attributed her, but which, written in German, seems to have been little read by French- and English-speaking historians until recent years. Other scholars, whom I mentioned in the introduction, have since contributed to establishing the truth about the queen.

And yet, as the citation with which I began this chapter verifies, the black legend lives on despite scholarly revisions. Even histories that do not mention the adultery rumor often perpetuate the notion of Isabeau as unusually avaricious. For example, an important and well-regarded history of the murder of Jean sans Peur decries Isabeau's cupidity, turning the queen into another Marie-Antoinette with her penchant for playing the shepherdess:

> La reine ne limitait malheureusement pas le luxe à ces objets de piété. Elle aimait les coûteuses réjouissances et les joyeux divertissements. Elle

dépensa beaucoup dans ses demeures. Elle possédait à Paris, depuis 1398, l'hôtel Barbette, où elle résidait habituellement. Et elle avait peu à peu acquis, à Saint-Ouen et à Clichy, un immense domaine rural où, "pour son esbatement et plaisance," elle faisait faire "aucuns labourages et nourrir du bestail et de la volaille.

[Unfortunately the queen did not limit luxury to pious objects. She loved expensive pleasures and joyful amusements. She spent a good deal of money on her residences. She owned in Paris, as of 1398, the Hôtel Barbette, where she lived occasionally. Little by little she had acquired at Saint-Ouen and at Clichy [which together formed] a huge rural property where for her "relaxation and pleasure" she had "some work done and raised animals and birds."][93]

The influence of Keralio's typology is visible here in the mention of the pleasure farm, which recalls the criticisms aimed at Marie-Antoinette for playing shepherdess. But the judgement overall is based on a failure to recognize the ubiquity of complaints about royal spending and, consequently, seeing Isabeau as particularly wasteful, cannot be justified. The perpetuation of the black legend of Isabeau in this particular scholarly monograph might be seen as a throwaway in that it does not detract significantly from the value of the work as a whole. Still, such uncritical references have prevented Isabeau's career from being taken seriously and attracting the scholarly attention it merits. One could draw up a long list of such dismissals of the queen in recent histories of the period. Despite its general availability, research revising misconceptions of the queen has been largely ignored to date.

In popular histories, a similar pattern is observable. A small number of popular historians focussing directly on Isabeau have worked to correct her black legend. Two recent examples treating the queen sympathetically, those of Marie-Véronique Clin and Philippe Delorme, have been published in French. And yet, the wild tale of Isabeau is common in the work of such writers as Barbara Tuchman. Undoubtedly the story is amusing, consistent with the pleasantly scandalized opinion of court life common among modern readers interested in European monarchies. Tuchman's version of Isabeau incorporates the imagery of the foreign Other with the excessive luxury typical of historical fiction of court life:

Frivolous and sensuous, still an alien with a thick German accent, humiliated by her husband's mad aversion, Isabeau abandoned Charles to his valets. . . . The Queen herself turned to frantic pleasures and to adultery

> combined with political intrigue and a passionate pursuit of money. Insecure in France, she devoted herself to amassing a personal fortune and promoting the enrichment and interests of her Bavarian family. . . . Her sway at court grew ever more extravagant and hectic, the ladies' dresses more low-necked, the amours scandalous, the festivities more extreme.[94]

The story as presented is an irresistible piece of scandal. And yet, one wonders why a recounting closer to the truth of Isabeau's life would not be interesting, as well.

I began this chapter by suggesting that the persistence of Isabeau's black legend can be attributed to her status as *lieu de mémoire*. Over the years, the queen has been transformed into a figure peculiarly well-suited to play the Other against which French nationalism erected itself. As the treacherous, dissipated, fleshly, and fleshy counterpart of the patriotic, chaste, spiritual, and sprite-like Joan of Arc, she has stood for everything that is not French. Promoted in the histories of schoolchildren, her legend became part of a narrative of nationalism which children imbibed at an early age and absorbed unreflectively into their collective memory. As the negative binary of Joan, the image of the lascivious Isabeau has never required supporting evidence. Of course, the queen has not been the victim of nationalism alone. She has been vilified within Christine de Pizan studies, for different reasons. Ironically, Christine herself is responsible to some extent. As we will see in chapter six, the poet foregrounds Isabeau's in-between position, promoting her as a mediator queen, above the narrow political interests of the ducal factions. In other words, Christine draws up the proper categories for understanding the players vying for a political primacy that she argues should be awarded to nonthreatening regents who will preserve the king's power rather than usurping it. But as I will demonstrate, Christine's depictions of Isabeau are not intended to criticize her inactivity, rather to rally support behind an iconically powerful figure.

With powerful women of the Middle Ages and early modern periods increasingly accorded scholarly attention, it is time to restore Isabeau of Bavaria to her proper place in the history of the reign of Charles VI. In what follows, I hope to offer possible avenues for further study of the life and career of this understudied queen.

CHAPTER THREE

Isabeau Mediatrix

Defining the Mediator Queen

> Haply a woman's voice may do some good
> When articles too nicely urged be stood upon.
>
> SHAKESPEARE, *HENRY V,* V: II, WORDS OF QUEEN ISABEL

HISTORIANS READING the same documents have drawn widely differing conclusions about the nature of Isabeau's queenship. For some she is a powerful figure, while for others she is essentially superfluous. But the documents only appear to offer conflicting information, I argue in this chapter, becoming coherent when we reassess how the queen's role was understood by the queen herself and by her contemporaries. However, such a reassessment cannot be straightforward. Although treatises dealing directly with female regency or indirectly with the subject through discussions of sovereignty and kingship would proliferate in the sixteenth century, during Isabeau's lifetime the phenomenon had not yet been systematically analyzed, and therefore it is difficult to reconstruct how the institution was understood. In researching Isabeau's role, we are forced to rely on more indirect evidence than is the case for later female regents.

The interdisciplinary study of medieval and early modern queenship offers a framework for considering Isabeau's role. Rereading primary sources in the light of perspectives derived from a number of disciplines, including literary criticism, history, anthropology, art history, and feminist studies, scholars have developed one concept in particular that helps to order the conflicting views over the extent and nature of Isabeau's power: that of the mediator queen. The mediator queen's activity has been characterized by Louise Olga Fradenburg as "interstitial," meaning that it is carried out between groups or factions.[1] The French word for mediator, *moyeneresse,* used by Isabeau's contemporary Christine de Pizan (1365–ca. 1431) to refer to the role of the princess, was current during Isabeau's lifetime. The *moyeneresse* is a facili-

tator, both central and marginal to institutionalized authority, both powerful and dependent.[2] The Latin term for mediator, *mediatrix,* of course, was common as well, and referred principally to the role of the Virgin as an advocate on behalf of the people before God.

Understood as a mediator queen, Isabeau emerges from the primary sources as an astute and discreet occupant of an "interstitial position" who worked primarily behind the scenes to safeguard the throne against the factions vying for power. In the first part of this chapter, I define the mediator queen in its general outlines. I then consider more specifically how the role was realized during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, drawing on the theories offered by Christine de Pizan in her *Livre des trois vertus* and testing her notions against examples of real women who acted as mediators. In the second half of the chapter, I explore Isabeau's career within the framework of the mediator queen. As I noted in chapter two, Isabeau is never treated as part of the contingent of female regents in early modern treatises on the subject, nor has her queenship been handled in this context in modern scholarship. True, her office was more restricted than that of any of the later female regents because Charles VI reassumed power whenever he was sane. Yet, given that the role of mediator queen would be given a juridical basis by the Salic Law, which regarded women as the safest regents because they were legally excluded from the throne, Isabeau's career should be seen as part of that longer history.

The Mediator Queen

A discussion of the mediator queen must begin with Marion Facinger's 1968 article "A Study of Medieval Queenship," which famously posits a diminution of the French queen's power after Adelaide of Maurienne (1092–1154). For Facinger, Adelaide's reign "marks the high and turning point" of the concept of queen as *consocia*. Subsequent queens are progressively separated from power. The three queens of Philip Augustus (1165–1223), writes Facinger, were *ancillae* rather than *consociae,* a conclusion based on an examination of how often queens are mentioned in royal charters.[3] The transformation occurred, Facinger contends, because as "the kingdom was consolidated and its organization became more complex, as royal authority was fortified and extended, so political power came to be centered more and more in the person of the king."[4] In the same way that "other rivals to the prime authority of the king had been skillfully atrophied by bureaucratic ma-

nipulation," the queen's office declined from "definition as partnership into a status which was largely honorific."[5] Not that the role was insignificant. A queen who "could make her will felt only through behind-the-scene machination," as Facinger describes it, could nonetheless lobby effectively on behalf of supplicants.[6] Paul Strohm argues that it is difficult to see the role of mediator queen as a source of power because it required "female subordination and self-marginalization," but it is also true that the role occupied a prominent spot in the medieval imaginary, and it is therefore worth investigating the type of authority it implied.[7]

While it is generally agreed that by the end of the twelfth century the queen served what was primarily a mediatory function, as opposed to participating directly in the politics of the kingdom, Facinger's work has been challenged and refined by scholars raising the example of such active queens as Blanche of Castile (1188–1253), whose reign followed that of Philip Augustus.[8] Blanche does indeed appear to be an anomaly when plugged into a paradigm of diminishing power. But I believe that her role in fact was prepared by the reorganization of government under Philip Augustus if we look more generally at the results of that process. The growing complexity of royal authority was accompanied by the augmentation of the personal power of the king, as Facinger writes. The great magnates of the realm lost power relative to Philip, excluded from his inner circle. However, the king assembled a new sort of advisor around himself, as John W. Baldwin explains, instigating the shift on his return from the crusade in 1191. The greatest barons of Philip's realm remained in the Holy Land when he returned, ill, to France, and, free of them, he gathered around him a crew of familiars of modest station.[9] "Being dependant on royal favor for their positions," writes Baldwin, "these new men were more congenial, reliable, and effective than the former barons."[10]

This change in perspective on close advisors, I suggest, created a new space for the queen. I am not suggesting that Philip himself viewed his queens as anything like "new men." Philip's problematic attitudes toward his queens are well-known: he tried unsuccessfully to divorce his first wife, Isabelle of Hainaut, after falling out with her family, the Counts of Flanders; after rejecting his second wife, Ingeborg, on their wedding night for reasons unknown, he had her removed from court where she remained while he took his third wife, Agnès de Méran, in a marriage that was not sanctioned by the church.[11] There is no evidence to suggest that Philip treated Agnès as a political advisor. After she died in 1201, he never married again.

However, I would suggest that in the decision to create a small close circle of advisors that excluded magnates in favor of loyal dependents, that is, men without power of their own who therefore were not rivals, Philip also opened up a way of envisioning the queen's role for subsequent rulers. Philip's son, Louis VIII, regarded his wife, Blanche of Castile, as a close and utterly loyal advisor. Fully engaged in politics, she played an integral role in Louis VIII's attempt to assume the throne of England with the aid of a cohort of rebellious English barons in 1216, an operation that his father, reigning King Philip, did not support. Just before his premature demise in 1226, Louis chose Blanche as guardian for his children and administrator of the kingdom, in preference to his half-brother, Philip Hurepel, until his son Louis IX was of an age to rule alone.[12] On his deathbed Louis VIII ordered "quod filius eius, qui ei in regno succederet, cum ipso regno et pueris ipsius aliis essent sub ballo sive tutela karissime domine nostre B[iancae] regine genitoris eorum, donec ad etatem legitimam pervenirent" (that his son, who would succeed him in the realm, with that realm and his other sons, would be under the care and guardianship of our dearest Lady Queen Blanche, their mother, until they came to the age of majority).[13]

Yet, as Miriam Shadis notes, royal charters from Louis' reign (1223–26) make no mention of Blanche.[14] If one read only these, one would be left with the inaccurate impression that she was inactive.[15] Thus this case suggests that a queen's activity or passivity cannot be measured by how frequently she appears in the royal documents. Like Philip Augustus's new men, the queen, entirely dependent on the king, was potentially his most trusted advisor because her welfare was inextricably tied to his. Of course, dependent roles were subject to the whims of the king, and he could abolish them if he wished. Philip III (1245–85) named not his wife but his brother, Pierre Count of Alençon, tutor and defender of the realm should he die before his son reached majority.[16] But as we saw in chapter two, Philip III's son, Philip IV the Fair, named his queen, Jeanne of Navarre, administrator of the realm and tutor of the children should he die before his oldest son was of age. Philip VI's queen, Jeanne of Burgundy, assumed regency of the realm for him while he was at war.[17] Charles V gave his wife precedence over all others as guardian should he die before his son reached majority.[18] It is not surprising, then, that Charles VI should have called on Isabeau to represent him during his "absences."

The notion of the king's consort as his most reliable advisor because of her very dependence, I believe, is an important step in the development of the me-

diator queen. But to this must be added the effects of the burgeoning Mariology of the twelfth century.[19] John Carmi Parsons observes that the "rapid expansion of royal bureaucracy that distanced the king from his subjects and his consort from the conduct of routine official" took place simultaneously with "the full flowering of devotion to the Queen of Heaven as intercessor."[20] Association with the Virgin allowed a crucial element of the queen's role to be articulated and reinforced: that of intercessor between the king and the people, and, moreover, the earthly queen was glorified by her association with her divine prototype.[21]

Still, even if the queen was associated with the Virgin, the ultimate mediator, she was subject to the same limits that constrained all women. She was responsible for negotiating peace but not endowed with the power to enforce the agreements she negotiated. Her role was therefore paradoxical, perpetually arousing expectations whose fulfillment she was unable to guarantee. She needed to be extremely clever, capable of convincing those with real power to accord her requests. The biblical Queen Esther seems to have served real-life queens as a model of intelligent mediation. At the same time, Esther taught the people how to imagine their queen. The coronation *ordo* of the queens of France features Esther's name prominently, first in a prayer intoned at the entrance to the Church, where biblical heroines, including Judith, along with the Virgin Mary are invoked. Second, she appears in a prayer, uttered at the moment of the coronation:

> Ineffabilem misericordiam tuam supplices exoramus, ut sicut Hester reginam Israelis causa salutis de captivitatis sue compede solutam ad Regis Assueri thalamum regnique sui consortium transire fecisti. Ita hanc famulam tuam N. humilitatis nostre benedictione christiane plebis gracia salutis ad dignam, sublimemque copulam Regis nostri misericorditer transire concedas.
> [We humbly beseech your ineffable mercy, as you made Queen Esther go toward the bed of the King Ahasuerus and partnership of his reign in order to loosen the chains of the Israelites for the sake of their salvation from captivity, in your mercy let this little woman of yours, with the blessing of our humility and the grace of salvation of the Christian people, enter into worthy and sublime union with our king.][22]

Christian Mérindol has pointed out that in one pane of the Sainte-Chapelle, Esther is depicted just above Blanche of Castile and Marguerite of Provence.[23] Lois L. Huneycutt writes that Durand of Champagne promoted

Esther as an exemplum for Jeanne of Champagne, queen of Philip the Fair, assuring the queen that "Esther's beauty of form was overshadowed by the beauty of her virtues." Huneycutt also notes that Jeanne was proclaimed a "second Esther" by partisans against the thirteenth-century Languedocian Inquisition in an attempt to garner her sympathy.[24] Christine de Pizan devotes chapter II.32.I of the *Cité de dames* to Esther, presenting her as a model of a queen who saved her people.

This biblical queen's aptness as a model for medieval queens is explained by Susan Zaeske, who assesses Esther's rhetorical success:

> Esther is the only speaker in the book who achieves unqualified success, and her speech is given the greatest attention. She does not confront the king directly; rather, her tone is ingratiating, her stance is supplicatory, and her preferred rhetorical form is that of petition. She speaks only at the invitation of the king, and on each occasion gains power by submitting to his authority. When the king offers a grandiose invitation to the queen to make a petition, an invitation that flaunts his power ("What troubles you, Queen Esther, and what is your request? Be it as great as half the kingdom, it shall be granted to you" [Esther 5:1–2]), Esther responds with contrasting humility. Her deferential rejoinders feature conditional subjunctive phrases such as "should it so please the king" (5:3) and "if I have found favor in the king's eyes, and should it please the king to grant my wish and to fulfill my request" (5:8).[25]

Esther's humility paradoxically redounded to her advantage. Clever manipulator of her own image, the queen achieved her desired effect while remaining within the model of inferiority demanded of her. Zaeske concludes that the book of Esther "teaches that direct, resistant rhetoric is ineffective, even dangerous, while clever, indirect, nonconfrontational methods will succeed in gaining the desired end—power."[26] As Strohm rightly stresses, the role of the queen was in fact more complex than thirteenth- and fourteenth-century commentaries in praise of the ideal indicate. Both the Virgin Mary and Esther embody "undeniable trappings of regality, not only symbolic power as epitomized through ceremony and splendid array, but access to practical wisdom and the worldly authority to enforce its dictates" in addition to compassion and docility.[27]

The clever queen, then, was an important force for peace and unity. In his history of Louis IX, Joinville explains that it was on his wife's behalf that Saint Louis made peace with Henry III of England against the wishes of his

Royal Council. Louis observed that although he was perfectly well aware that the King of England had no right to any land in France, he, Louis, would nonetheless yield to him because the wives of the two kings were sisters: "Car nous avons dous serours à femmes et sont nostre enfant germain, par quoy il affiert bien que paiz y soit" (because we have two sisters for wives and our children are cousins, for which reasons it is fitting that there be peace).[28]

It is important, however, to remember that the queen might come up against obstacles that even the cleverest of women could not master. Besides serving as a mediator between the king and the people in a literal sense, the mediator queen united two families in her own person. Personifying an alliance was a tricky proposition, because if in the eyes of the family from which a princess issued, she represented the inside contact in the midst of new allies, she also represented the "outsider" for her married family. Describing the hazards of incarnating an alliance, Fradenburg has written, "queens embody the unity of nation or people or land, or they embody the forces that might tear that unity to pieces."[29]

A queen faced danger from all sides, including her own family. A princess' parents did not send her to a different land to be absorbed without a trace into a foreign culture; they expected something in return for their investment. The princess was to represent her family's interests in her new home. But this was not an easy charge for what was often a very young stranger in a strange land, especially one in an inherently dependent position. Bethany Aram's study of Juana of Castile describes the reaction of the young woman's family when she failed to carry out her responsibilities to her own people after she left her native Spain for the Burgundian court: "The household that Archduke Philippe appointed for his bride governed her so successfully that Juana's parents soon began to question her piety and loyalty to their interests."[30]

The princess also served as the focus for any hostility that her married family might eventually bear toward her birth family. Philip Augustus married Isabelle of Hainaut specifically to create a counterbalance to the dominance at court of his mother's Champenois relatives. But when Isabelle's father, Baldwin V of Hainaut, became a problem for Philip, he attacked Baldwin by threatening to divorce his young wife.[31] Another stark example of the princess as target of aggression aimed at her birth family can be seen in the fate of two of the daughters of Jean sans Peur when he fell from royal favor after having caused the Cabochian revolt. In 1415, Jean sent ambassadors to request that banishments of his followers handed down in response to the duke's role in

the Cabochian revolt be revoked and also that his daughter, Marguerite, married to dauphin, Louis of Guyenne, be allowed to return to the dauphin's side. The young man, furious at his father-in-law, had banished Marguerite and taken a mistress from the Cassinel family, strong Orleans-Armagnac allies.[32] Another of Jean sans Peur's daughters, Catherine, bore the brunt of the anger directed against her father. Married to the son of Duke of Anjou in 1410 (although the marriage was never consummated), the girl was returned to her birth family as an insult to Jean after the Cabochian revolt.[33]

Theorizing the Role: Christine de Pizan

Information about how the mediator queen was imagined during the fifteenth century must for the most part be gleaned here and there from texts that offer limited clues for sustained discussion of the role dates only from the sixteenth century. Christine de Pizan's "handbook" for female behavior, the *Trois vertus,* however, offers rare insight into the role, as many scholars have noted. The liminal position of the princess described in the *Trois vertus* highlights the constraints faced by women as they negotiated their positions. The book also defines very clearly the different facets of the role.

The primary task that Christine assigns women in the political world is that of intercession; the people will come to the princess asking her to right her husband's wrongs.

> Si avendra aucunes fois par aventure que le dit prince par mauvais conseil ou pour aucune cause vouldra grever son peuple d'aucune charge, par quoy les subgiéz, qui sentiront leur dame pleine de bonté, de pitié et de charité, venront vers elle et tres humblement la supplieront que il lui plaise estre pour eulx vers le prince, car ilz sont povres et ne pourroient sans trop grant grief ou estre desers, souffire a tel finance.
> [Thus it will happen sometimes that the prince, heeding bad advice, or for some other reason will want to burden his people with a tax. For this reason, the subjects, who feel their lady to be full of goodness, pity, and charity, will go to her and beg her humbly, if it pleases her, to go to the prince on their behalf, because they are poor and could not bear the burden of such a tax without great trouble or ruin.][34]

In these cases, the mediating princess will tell the people that she will be their good friend "en la peticion que ilz demandent et en toutes aultres choses de son pouoir" (in the petition that they are requesting and in all other things

in her power), but she will also remind them that they "soyent loyaulx et bons obeissans a son dit seigneur" (should be loyal and obedient to their lord).[35]

In addition to this role, the princess, force for peace, works to temper impulsive male reactions. When war threatens her country, writes Christine, the task of the princess is "d'estre moyenne de paix et de concorde, et de travailler que guerre soit eschivee pour les inconveniens qui avenir en peuent" (to be the means of peace and harmony, and to work to avoid war because of the trouble that can arise from it).[36] Women are by nature peacemakers, while men, strong and hastily aroused to battle, fail to think of the consequences of their actions: "Mais nature de femme est plus paoureuse et aussi de plus doulce condicion, et pour ce, se elle veult et elle est saige, estre peut le meilleur moyen a pacifier l'omme, qui soit." (But women are by nature more fearful and also of sweeter disposition, and for this reason, if they so wish and if they are wise, they can be the best means there is of pacifying men.)[37] Thus when violence threatens, the princess will mediate between the prince and warring lords,

> disant que le mesfait est moult grant et que a bonne cause en est le prince indignéz, et que s'entente est de s'en vengier si comme il est raison, mais nonpourtant elle, qui vouldroit tousjours le bien de paix, ou cas que ilz se vouldroient amender ou en faire amande convenable, mettroit voulentiers peine d'essaier, se pacifier les pourroit vers son seigneur.
> [saying that the misdeed was very serious and that with good cause the prince is angry about it, and that he intends to avenge himself for it as is right; nonetheless she, who would always want the good of peace, if they would like to make amends or make suitable reparations, would happily make an effort to try to find a way to pacify her husband.][38]

But how will the princess wield influence? Here Christine treats the contradiction Strohm addresses in his discussion of the figures of Mary and Esther in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century literature of how the compassionate, maternal, and peace-loving mediator forces compliance. The scenarios that Christine describes in the *Trois vertus* reflect Isabeau's position on the governing council as of 1402. The problem for the queen was that she could not force the rivals to maintain peaceful relations. Christine acknowledges that the mediatory role assigned to women is mapped onto a hierarchy of the genders that allows men to ignore their advice if they choose. To overcome this problem, the poet coaches her readers to act carefully and

cleverly, with diplomatically expressed recommendations. The primary quality of the successful mediating princess is cleverness. Despite the traditional association of women with the body and men with rationality, women according to Christine represent measure and intelligence as opposed to unthinkingly emotional men. She writes that "les hommes sont par nature plus courageux et plus chaulx, et le grant desir que ilz ont d'eulx vengier ne leur laisse aviser les perilz ne les maulx qui avenir en peuent" (men are by nature hardier and hotter, and the great desire they have to avenge themselves does not allow them to think in advance about the dangers and evils that might come from this).[39] The mediating princess will attempt

> par bel et par doulceur de l'attraire a soy, et s'elle cognoist que ce soit le meilleur de lui en dire quelque chose, elle lui en touchera a part, doulcement et benignement. Une fois l'amonnestera par devocion, autres foiz part pitié qu'il doit avoir d'elle, autres foiz en riant comme se elle jouast.
> [through cheer and sweetness to attract him to her point of view, and if she recognizes that she needs to tell him something, she will bring it up when they are alone, sweetly and gently. Sometimes she will urge him because of the devotion he owes her, sometimes by his pity for her, other times laughing as if she is playing.][40]

She will maintain her cheerful demeanor and dignity even when she fails to achieve the result she seeks; when she is abused by those in power, she will remain impassive. When

> elle aperçoive et sache que aucun ou aucunes personnes poissans ne lui vueillent point de bien et l'ai en male grace, et qui lui nuiroient s'ilz pouoient et l'esloigneroit de l'amour et de la grace de son seigneur . . . ou la mettroient par leurs faux rapors mal des barons, des subgiéz ou du peuple, elle ne fera de ce nul semblant que s'en aperçoive, ne que les repute ne tiengne ses anemis
> [she realizes that some powerful person or persons do not wish her well and hold her in bad grace, and that if they could they would hurt her and damage her relationship with her husband . . . or who would through false reports put her in a bad light with the barons, the subjects, or the people, she will not show that she notices, nor that she considers them her enemies.][41]

Beyond acting as an intercessor, the mediating princess must also be ready to step in for her husband in the event that he predecease her. In the *Trois ver-*

tus, Christine explains that the job of keeping the barons in line will fall to the widowed princess if her son is too young to do so. She will depend upon her wisdom to do this: "le convient il qu'elle employe sa prudence et son savoir pour les mettre et tenir en paix" (she needs to use her prudence and knowledge to bring about and maintain peace).[42] Christine had earlier proposed that woman could take on roles normally fulfilled by men when a man was lacking through her own example. In the *Mutacion de la fortune,* she describes herself metamorphosing into a man to take care of her family when her own husband dies.[43]

To justify the assumption of power in the case of the death of a husband, Christine refers to the Virgin, whom she regards not only as an intercessor but also as a coruler with her son.[44] In the *Cité des dames,* the poet depicts the allegorical figure Justice welcoming the Virgin as ruler of the City of Ladies by pronouncing her second only to her son, as "celle qui est non pas seulement leur royne, mais qui a dominacion et seigneurie sur toutes puissances creés apres un seul filz que elle porta et conceut du Saint Esperit qui est Filz de Dieu le Pere" (she who is not only their queen, but who has dominion and administration, after her only son whom she carried and conceived through the Holy Spirit, and who is the son of God the Father).[45] Earl Jeffrey Richards has observed that Christine presents

> implicitement la Vierge comme un modèle de pouvoir féminin en mettant en parallèle la *regalitas* de la Reine des Cieux avec la *regalitas* de la reine de France, précisément au moment où les questions de la régence et de la succession féminines au trône arrivent au premier plan de l'actualité politique.
> [the Virgin implicitly as a model of feminine power, by drawing a parallel between the *regalitas* of the queen of Heavens and the *regalitas* of the queen of France, exactly at the time when questions of feminine regency and succession to the throne were in the forefront of political activity.][46]

Historical Examples of Mediating Princesses

Christine's theory of the princess as *moyeneresse de paix* was grounded in practical reality. Powerful women took part in negotiating peace, just as she describes. A corps of professional mediators developed during the Middle Ages who carried out detailed negotiations between adversaries.[47] Still, the

process of creating peace retained significant ritualistic and personal elements.

Perhaps the most renowned image of queenly intercession is that of Philippa, Queen of England, kneeling before Edward III to entreat him to spare the bourgeois of Calais in 1347.[48] Shortly after this episode, in 1355, Jeanne of Evreux and Blanche of Navarre, aunt and sister of Charles le Mauvais, helped the French and English avoid war by procuring a pardon for their rebellious relative.[49] Charles had just struck an alliance with Edward III of England, who was ready to invade France. Jeanne and Blanche hurried to Paris, where they successfully pleaded with King Jean le Bon to forgive Charles if he would allow his lands to be confiscated. Another example of mediation is recorded by Pintoin, who writes that in 1391, Duchess of Brittany, Jeanne of Navarre, daughter of Charles le Mauvais and future wife of Henry IV of England (but at the time married to Duke Jean of Brittany), saved from certain imprisonment a group of French ambassadors sent by the king of France to deal with her husband. Getting wind of the Duke of Brittany's plans to lock up the ambassadors, the Duchess of Brittany's brother begged her to intervene with her husband on behalf of the ambassadors. The venerable duchess agreed to intervene for the sake of peace and concord (*pro pace et concordia*).[50] Although pregnant and nearing delivery (or perhaps deliberately using the maternal impression created by pregnancy to her advantage), the duchess took her children in her arms and supplicated her husband not to alienate the King of France. Her prayers were efficacious ("Preces vallide fuerent efficaces"). Strohm compares Jeanne to Philippa, writing: "As in the paradigmatic precedent of Philippa's plea before Edward III for the burghers of Calais, she appears adventitiously. . . . She intervenes at a time when all hope of conciliation seems to have evaporated, and her fragile femininity and maternal self-abnegation are emphasized."[51] Likewise, as in Philippa's intervention, Strohm continues, "she has the merit of recommending a course of action the duke probably wishes upon sober consideration to adopt, but could not adopt without running the risk of seeming changeable and hence unmanly."

Another example is offered by Froissart. In 1392, when the royal uncles reasserted control of the government at the onset of Charles's mental illness, they threatened one of the marmousets, Bureau de la Rivière, with death. Fortunately for him, his aunt, the young Duchess of Berry, intervened, imploring her husband, Jean of Berry, to save his life. Froissart concocts a long plea for the duchess, replete with exclamations of sorrow and "vous prie

humblement."[52] He then reports that the Duke of Berry was affected: before the pleas of his wife "amolioit grandement son cuer qu'il avoit dur et auster sur le seigneur de la Rivière" (his heart, which had been hard and unyielding toward the Seigneur de la Rivière, softened greatly).[53]

Le Fèvre de Rémy describes another act of mediation, this time by the Duchess of Bourbon. "Au mois de mars [1411], à la prière et requête de la duchesse de Bourbon, fille du duc de Berry, fut, par le duc d'Orléans, le seigneur de Croy mis à plaine deliverance de la prison où il avoit longement esté." (In the month of March [1411], at the prayer and request of the Duchess of Bourbon, daughter of the Duke of Berry, the Seigneur de Croy was released from the prison where he had been long held by the Duke of Orleans.)[54]

Another royal female intercessor is described by the chronicler the Bourgeois of Paris. In April 1435, just after Easter, he depicts "les demoiselles et les bourgeoises of Paris" accosting the Duchess of Bedford to beg her to restore peace in the kingdom. According to the Bourgeois, the result of their request was the Congress of Arras.[55]

Still another example is offered by Isabelle of Portugal, who intervened in a dispute between an "ecuyer de cuisine du comte de Charolais, Jean d'Ostende," and the city of Lille. He had just been elected the *roi de l'Epinette,* which mean that he was obligated to offer banquets and jousts during that fifteen-day festival. Those elected *roi de l'Epinette* often fled, for fear of being ruined by the exorbitant cost of the banquets. For this reason the town elders forbade Jean's leaving the city. He was then imprisoned, until Isabelle intervened on his behalf.[56]

In a final example, Philip of Cleves, angered by Charles VIII's Peace of Frankfurt, sent his wife to the king to beg the king's support: "Le dit Messire Philippe de Clèves envoya Madame sa femme qui lors estoit fort belle, jeune et tendre, devers le roy de France, pour avoir secours de gens et d'argent." (The said Monsieur Philip of Cleves sent Madame his wife who then was very beautiful, young, and tender, to the King of France to ask for help for the people and money.) The reaction of Charles VIII serves as a final comment on the efficaciousness as well as hazards of female meditation: although the king promised much, he broke his promise ("il faillit à sa promesse").[57]

The process of negotiating peace involved, as Catherine Bell has written of ritual more generally, "restricted codes of communication to heighten the formality of movement and speech; distinct and specialized personnel; objects, texts, and dress designated for use in these activities alone; verbal and

gestural combinations that evoke or purport to be the ways things have always been done."[58] Although the restoration of harmony is always accompanied by ritual to some degree, these aspects of the peace process become especially important, writes Paul Hyams, during periods when violence is frequent. Truces must be acted out and peace restored through performance. "Durable peace, like good justice," he explains, "must be made manifest.

> The exchange of very visible symbols through ritual acts engaged the local community as spectators and witnesses. Peer pressure remained an important incentive for the keeping of promises. The minimum ritual act was probably the classic kiss of peace, whose meaning must have been universally recognized and so probably formed part even of settlements that do not mention it. Among much else, the kiss is, of course, a marvelous emblem of shared vulnerability and hence an earnest sign of a positive, mutually supportive relationship. This kiss on its own takes us beyond the merely negative function that provides for a simple cessation of hostilities toward a renewal of love and friendship. But the form peace settlements take is worth record and remembrance only toward the creation of a new more positive relation between the parties.[59]

To a certain extent, the queen's association with peacemaking arose from the medieval tendency to consider females the more pacific sex. Socially prominent women often acted as mediators in disputes, arbitrating between two adversarial parties, in both unofficial and official capacities. Nicolas Offenstadt describes the mixture of practical negotiation and rite that characterized female interventions. Women helped to reestablish harmony "par des gestes et des paroles bien spécifiés; modes façonnés par la propension de leur sexe—de leur genre—à faire la paix mieux que les hommes" (with carefully specified gestures and words; modes fashioned by the propensity of their sex —of their gender—to make peace better than men). Still, he continues, "actes, rites et discours s'entremêlent sans cesse sans qu'il soit possible—ni qu'il faille—faire la part des choses" (acts, rites, and discourse weave themselves together endlessly without the possibility or necessity of separating them from one another).[60]

Anthropological discussion of the importance of the marginal in certain rituals suggests a further reason that queens might have been important to reestablishing peace. In particular, Victor Turner's discussion of "liminal" beings with their peculiar aptness for reflecting—and causing reflection on—social structures sheds light on the inverse relationship between the medieval

queen's actual power and her significance as mediator. Liminal beings fall both inside and outside of a given system. "Neither here nor there," Turner writes, "they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial."[61] Because they straddle different worlds, liminal figures efface social divisions and are thus capable of generating social unity, summoning a mythological past, or as Turner describes it, reaffirming "a generalized social bond that has ceased to be and has simultaneously yet to be fragmented into a multiplicity of structural ties." Cultural forms arising in connection with liminal beings thus permit "periodical reclassifications of reality and man's relationship to society, nature, and culture."[62] Physically close to the king, but occupying a different universe, the queen served as nexus between him and others, and she often symbolized the possibility of social cohesion.[63]

The example of Isabelle of Portugal, politically active duchess of Duke Philip the Good, demonstrates that highly placed women were involved in peacemaking at the level of negotiating the terms of treaties, while also serving a ritualistic function. The duchess was involved in negotiations in a congress of 1439.[64] However, it is interesting to note that she was also given credit for helping to insure peace in a situation where she served a purely honorary function. Martin Le Franc credits her in the *Champion de Dames* with bringing about the end of the war between the French and the English at the Congress of Arras. Isabelle did indeed attend the congress, but she played no role in those particular peace negotiations.[65] As Monique Sommé points out, Charles VII likewise credits the duchess with effecting peace in a letter of December 1435, in which he assigns her a pension of 4,000 livres tournois, "en faveur de ce qu'elle a tenu la main a la paix et reunion de nostredit frere et cousin avecques nous et s'i est grandement emploiee" (because she extended her hand to the peace and reunion between our brother and cousin and us and worked very hard at it). That she was so lauded by Le Franc and Charles VII suggests that her very presence was regarded as important to the peace process. The ritualistic element of the queen's involvement in peacemaking, thus, does not deny the practicality or the seriousness of the role she might play. As Offenstadt writes, "La ritualité de l'intercession pacificatrice décrite à loisir par les chroniqueurs ne s'oppose en rien à une action déterminée, en profondeur. L'engagement des femmes pour la paix se caractérise en effet par la persévérance et le labeur, s'inscrivant par là dans une règle plus générale de l'intervention diplomatique." (The ritual of pacifying intercession described by the chroniclers is not incompatible with de-

termined and profound action. Women's engagement for peace is characterized by perseverance and hard work, in line with more general diplomatic intervention.)[66]

Beyond the crucial roles of restoring peace and interceding on behalf of others, the mediating queen might substitute herself for her husband, acting as coruler, when he was absent. This is the situation that Christine de Pizan describes. That a woman might fill in when a male is lacking is an old and venerable concept, existing in customary law. For example, in a letter of 1164 to Louis VII, a knight refuses to appear before the Viscountess of Narbonne, basing his case on Roman Law, which specifies that a woman cannot act as a judge. However, Louis replies that "lorsque le sexe fort fait défaut, il est permis à une femme d'administrer l'héritage" (when there is no member of the strong sex, it is permissible that a woman administer the heritage).[67] Blanche of Castile was the most revered example of a coruler of the Middle Ages, but Jeanne of Burgundy also substituted for King Philip VI while he was occupied with war. Other prominent rulers in their husband's stead were Jean sans Peur's wife, Marguerite of Bavaria, who looked after his Flemish territories when he was absent, and Philip the Good's wife, Isabelle of Portugal.

Isabeau Mediatrix

It is now time to consider Isabeau's career against the paradigm of the mediator queen. The role was a flexible one, its contours dependent on its embodiment in a real situation. Isabeau's queenship has long been deemed a failure. She was often required to serve as a mediator, literally, between warring factions, and, because she was unable to halt the feuding, she has been judged to have been incompetent in politics, ineffectual in her role. Besides incompetent, she has been perceived as fickle, opportunistically changing sides. Although Alfred Coville published his work on the Cabochian revolt in 1888, the assessment of Isabeau that he presents therein influenced and continues to influence the queen's reputation.

> Isabelle était incapable de guérir le royaume. Elle tenta à plusieurs reprises de rétablir l'accord entre les ducs; mais, au fond, elle eut longtemps une préférence marquée pour le parti des Orléanais. En janvier 1403, elle réussit à faire signer aux deux ducs Philippe de Bourgogne et Louis d'Orléans un traité de réconciliation; au début de 1405, elle ac-

ceptait l'amitié de Jean sans Peur; ces démonstrations ne pouvaient être sincères.

[Isabeau was incapable of healing the kingdom. She tried several times to re-establish peace between the dukes, but, at heart, she long bore a marked preference for the Orleanist party. In January 1403, she managed to get the two dukes, Philip of Burgundy and Louis of Orleans, to sign a treaty of reconciliation; at the beginning of 1405, she accepted a friendship with Jean sans Peur; these demonstrations could not have been sincere.][68]

Because the image of the queen as incompetent and divisive has been so enduring, I begin this half of the chapter by demonstrating that recent scholarship on feuding requires that we revise this anachronistic perception. I then examine the royal ordinances defining Isabeau's role to define the role she was assigned as closely as possible and consider some of the iconography and symbolism through which Isabeau and her contemporaries articulated her role as mediator. I hope to insert Isabeau's career into the tradition of queenly regents.

Coville's negative evaluation of the queen presupposes that the Armagnac-Burgundian conflict—which began about 1398 with the territorial rivalry between Philip of Burgundy and his nephew Louis of Orleans, assumed the shape of a vendetta with the assassination of Louis of Orleans followed by the revenge assassination of Jean sans Peur in 1419, and dissipated in 1435 when the Treaty of Arras made allies of the Burgundians and Charles VII against the English—was in some way an aberrant phenomenon susceptible of being halted by a competent arbitrator. More specifically, it presupposes that this conflict was limited primarily to two individuals, whose agreement to an accord would actually end the fighting. Furthermore, it assumes that switching sides—the symptom that motivates Coville's negative assessment—was not the norm among the fifteenth-century French aristocrats involved in dispute. However, none of these assumptions can be applied to feuding in general or to the Armagnac-Burgundian feud in particular.

Regarding the first assumption, that feuding was an aberration easily controlled by competent mediation, recent scholarship suggests that the process was not only endemic to but in fact inseparable from medieval political life: indeed, fifteenth-century French society was structured by feuding. The practice, Stuart Carroll has observed, was "integral to the conduct of politics in early modern France because it was one of the key forms of competition for

power, a mechanism by which the struggle for dominance was played out."[69] Feuding aims to settle specific conflicts that cannot be resolved through legal channels. Guy Halsall explains that it occurs "between groups of roughly equal socio-political power, where there is no 'higher' political authority which is capable of ending the dispute, either through the participants' mutual acceptance of its right to arbitrate, or through its ability to stamp out the dispute forcibly."[70] A claimant challenged, so to speak, with an act of violence. The victim of the violence responded to prevent the result sought by the instigator. But although a feud was composed of a series of violent acts, when it finally came to an end, the reconciliation was intended to settle the issue that had provoked the initial attack. Explaining the dynamic of the process, Halsall writes: "Killings create a 'debt' paid off by retaliatory violence, only to place the other side in the position of debtors. Although a group is justified in exacting revenge for a previous attack, their retaliation does not end the conflict; it merely justifies the other side's next blow. Thus a 'true' feud is terminated with difficulty, and never through violence (unless one group exterminates the other)."[71]

It has been suggested that feuding did not exist in fifteenth-century France. Recent criticism, however, disputes this view. Howard Kaminksy has observed that, because of the French king's eventual monopolization of the right to violence, France traditionally has been considered to have followed a different path from that of feud-prone Germany on the way to political consolidation.[72] However, he suggests that the difference between late medieval France and Germany is not as great as has long been believed. In Germany, he notes, the "governance of a king or territorial prince, like that of lesser lordships, had the primary function of preserving its subjects' property rights; should it exceed these bounds, its armigerous noble subjects had not only the right but also the power to keep it in line. The medieval constitution of lordship, then, was manifest in feuds of noble subjects with each other and, in extreme cases, feuds of the subjects against the prince."[73] But the model applies to France, as well, Kaminsky states. "The key point here," he writes, "passed over by statist historians, is that in medieval France (or indeed medieval anywhere) only a fraction of administrative, judicial and coercive authority over the people lay with a central government, what the historians call the *Etat*. For the overwhelming majority of people this authority was exercised by individuals or corporations holding lordship over them or otherwise possessing low, middle or high justice."[74] A lord who saw the property rights of his people violated had the duty to protect them; he attacked to provoke a change.

Seigneurial justice and royal justice were brought into "mutual accommodation" during the early modern period, but if the late medieval right to feud was "engaged" with, it was not "liquidated."[75] That the Armagnac-Burgundian conflict might have been resolved once and for all by a competent arbitrator receives further challenge from recent scholarship on "integrative factionalism," that is, the tendency of individuals to group their own disputes around a central quarrel to bring about resolutions. Malcolm Vale notes that old injuries "could be and frequently were paid off by men sheltering beneath the Anglo-French conflict to justify their warlike behaviour towards their neighbours."[76] As Timur Pollack-Lagushenko writes of the particular configuration of the Armagnac-Burgundian conflict: "Two of the most powerful figures [Louis of Orleans and Jean sans Peur] in the kingdom refused to be reconciled and this animosity served as a constant around which individuals could arrange their own private interests."[77]

This research disputes Coville's notion that Isabeau could have brought an end to the Armagnac-Burgundian conflict had she been a competent mediator. Although this conflict was useful for structuring private disputes, the French nobility would have chosen another conflict around which to structure its individual quarrels had this one not existed. Isabeau staunched the feud at different points, but it re-emerged and continued under different forms, always carrying a set of other related quarrels within its penumbra. Isabeau could not have "healed the kingdom" because the malady was not a private dispute between two men. Rather, the malady was the way the kingdom resolved disputes related to property. Stephen D. White has written of feuding in twelfth-century France that "it is far from certain that these interlocking conflicts and struggles ever came to a truly definitive end."[78] The same must be said of early fifteenth-century France.

Finally, the charge that Isabeau worsened the conflict with her side-switching simply cannot be maintained. It has been well-documented that the French aristocracy supported whoever had the most to offer at any given time.[79] If one looks at the loyalties of the major lords involved in the Armagnac-Burgundian conflict, it becomes clear that many of them changed sides at some point over the years: Charles d'Albret, Louis II Duke of Anjou, the Duke of Bar, the Duke of Berry, and Jean and Louis of Bourbon take their places alongside Isabeau for fickleness.[80] The only true "loyalists" were those responsible for the feud in the first place. But even those most closely related to the faction leaders wavered. Antoine of Brabant faltered in his support of his brother, Jean sans Peur.[81] Pollack-Lagushenko notes one might "inter-

pret this data as a sign of the general treachery, inconstancy, and perpetual intrigue among the French aristocracy." The problem with such an interpretation, however, is that "intrigue was itself the norm."[82]

Had Isabeau clung to one or the other of the factions, by definition she would have been part of the feud. Her role, however, required her to rise above the factions, in an attempt to broker reconciliation. The situation changed during the second decade of the fifteenth century. As the factions grew larger and more warlike, she moved from attempting to reconcile the groups to encouraging one to crush the other.[83] Thus she began to ally herself with a faction when such a move seemed likely to bring an end to the feud. But the notion of oscillating as an evil is quite simply an anachronism.

The Royal Ordinances

In what follows, I attempt to reconstruct the role that the king created for Isabeau in response to this conflict. The chronicles contribute little to our understanding of the queen's role except to verify that she was perceived as a force for peace through their occasional mentions of her mediating activity. However, a close examination of the royal ordinances related to her role in the government illustrates how it developed. I argue that although it evolved through several phases, her role was always predicated on her possession of qualities perceived to be crucial to a mediator: she is motivated not by ambition for herself but by her desire to protect her family and the kingdom; she is peaceful; she is just. The queen's first assignment is guardianship of the royal children. However, her role is later expanded to include the job of managing the feud between Louis of Orleans and Philip of Burgundy; she is imagined in the relevant ordinances as *moyenne de paix et de concorde,* as Christine de Pizan expresses it in the *Trois vertus*.[84] From 1403, the queen begins to occupy the role of caretaker of the throne—coregent—during the king's "absences." Although I mention certain of the regency ordinances published after this date, I argue that they are not as significant as these early examples, for by 1403, her role had been established, and, for the rest of her career, until she proclaimed her right to govern in place of her mad husband in 1417, she adhered to the outlines set forth in these early ordinances.

The institution of regency inherited by Charles VI possessed few firm guidelines, for, despite a number of documents clearly intended to create precedent, his predecessors had always formed regencies to respond to the demands of the situations they faced.[85] Still, in the first of his regency ordi-

nances, Charles VI follows a model established by his father, Charles V. In ordinances of August and October 1374, Charles V had separated regency of the realm from *tutelle,* or guardianship of the dauphin, and assigned the tasks to different people. Regency went to Charles V's brother Louis of Anjou, while *tutelle* of the dauphin was given to a college of guardians that included his queen (although in fact she predeceased him) and the king's other brothers, Jean of Berry and Philip of Burgundy.[86]

At first glance, *tutelle* may seem far removed from politics. However, the physical possession of the dauphin potentially represented a strong claim to power. To make this point, in his ordinance of August 1374 Charles V tells the story of how an heir was once used to rouse the people to action (and Charles VI recounts the same story in his own ordinance of 1392). In the seventh century, four-month-old Chilperic, held aloft in the arms of his mother the queen, inspired the nobility to win a great victory. Having seen the child, Charles V's ordinance concludes, the nobles were excited and moved to obedience and prompt service. Control of the dauphin was tantamount to control of the kingdom.[87] Charles V, then, divides the equally important powers between two parties.

The reason for this division of power was that regents did not like to step aside when a minor king came of age, as history had shown, and, furthermore, Charles V seems to have assumed that his brothers would engage in interfamilial power struggles if they were not restrained by a system of checks and balances. However, the capacity of this dispersion of power to prevent strife was never tested. When the twelve-year-old Charles VI ascended the throne after his father's death in 1380, Philip of Burgundy pushed Louis of Anjou from the regency. And yet, no conflict followed because the Duke of Burgundy was manifestly more adept at wielding power than his two brothers, who did not challenge his ascendancy.[88] Louis of Anjou decamped to pursue his own interests in Naples, where he died in 1384, while Jean of Berry, occupied with his royal lieutenancy in Languedoc, left governance of the kingdom to Philip. Philip thus served as effective king of France until Charles VI finally declared his independence in 1388, at the age of twenty, requesting that his uncles leave his Royal Council.[89]

The situation was different in 1392. As we saw in chapter one, Louis of Orleans began his ascent when Charles VI unseated the royal uncles in 1388, activating rivalry between his brother and his uncle Philip of Burgundy, which became potentially dangerous when the king began to suffer from periodic episodes of madness. To prevent the realm from descending into end-

less feuding in case of his death, Charles VI initially created regency ordinances that, like his father's, divided power. He named a college of guardians for the royal children, headed by Isabeau and aided by the royal uncles.[90] He left regency of the realm to Louis of Orleans.[91] The ordinance of 1393 assigning Louis regency makes no mention of the intermittent regency necessitated by the king's madness. Nonetheless, the duke claimed the right to rule when the king was indisposed on the basis of that ordinance.[92] Although Philip attempted to push Louis aside, he failed to halt the young man's rise to power.[93] During the course of the 1390s, the power of the two rivals became evenly balanced, precisely the condition for feuding.

Thus the division of power did not prove effective, and the perilous situation that Charles had unwittingly created required him to reconceive regency. As Marie-Luise Heckmann has pointed out, three European models were available to the king. To summarize Heckmann, he could cede power intermittently to a college of counselors. Or he could renounce his office altogether, turning it over to a new ruler. Finally, he could retain his office, but create a *Koadjutorium,* a coregency, to aid him during his periods of madness. Charles chose the third solution. However, the very concept of coregency suggested differing theoretical levels of power. At one extreme was full power of governance during the king's absence. At the other was simply standing in, as a cipher, so to speak, making no real decisions.[94] The first example of coregency as described by Heckmann is represented by the earliest arrangements designating Louis as regent with real power. But besides the obvious threat of warfare caused by the rivalry between Louis and Philip, Charles VI came to fear over the years that one or the other would reduce him to the status of ward, an intent of which his brother and the Burgundian dukes regularly accused each other.[95] The king attempted to remedy the situation by creating a different type of coregency, one in which Isabeau would be key.

I believe that an examination of Charles's regency ordinances of the first years of the fifteenth century leads to this conclusion. Two ordinances were passed in 1402, one of which designated the queen mediator between Louis and Philip, a role occupied by Charles when he was well, and the other of which, promulgated a few months later, named her Charles's substitute on the Royal Council. With these the king gives Isabeau the authority necessary to protect his throne from his relatives, at least in theory.[96] An ordinance of 1403 takes the process further, abolishing regency altogether. This ordinance proclaims that the heir to the throne, whatever his age, will take power im-

mediately upon the king's death. Regency as an institution vanishes; however, absent a regent, the queen mother would play a crucial role. Charles thus redistributes power in Isabeau's favor, creating what amounts to a coregency for her.

To comprehend the nature of this coregency, it is important to notice that the ordinances creating it all emphasize the qualities compatible with the notion of a coregent as a representative of royal power, as opposed to a powerful regent ruling in his or her own name. The ordinance of 1393 had already justified Isabeau's primacy in the *tutelle* of the dauphin with reference to her positive maternal qualities: "La mere a greigneur & plus tender amour à ses enfans, & a le cuer plus doulz & plus soigneux de les garder & nourrir amoureusement, que quelconque autre personne, tant leur soit prochaine de linage, & quant à ce doit estre preferée à touz autres." (The mother has a greater and more tender love for her children, and with a soft and caring heart takes care of and nourishes them more lovingly than any other person, no matter how closely related, and for this reason, she is to be preferred above all others.)[97]

That Isabeau was believed to possess the peaceful qualities foregrounded in this ordinance receives corroboration from Pintoin. He writes that when trouble brewed between Louis and Philip of Burgundy, the people called on Isabeau and the king's uncle, Jean of Berry, to intercede. Months before the dispute that nearly came to blows in December 1401, the threat of armed conflict between Louis of Orleans and Philip of Burgundy frightened the people to the point that they requested intervention: "Regni principes videntes intestina hec odia amborum ducum nimis esse periculos . . . ducem Biturie et reginam reiteratis vicibus oraverunt, ut pro bono pacis medios se constituerent inter partes." (The princes of the realm, seeing the hatred of the two dukes to be excessively dangerous . . . prayed the Duke of Berry and the queen several times to intervene between the parties in the interests of peace.)[98] Isabeau mediated successfully upon that occasion.

Isabeau's ability to appease is further emphasized by the ordinance of March 1402, which designated her official mediator between the king's brother and uncle. An ordinance of July 1, 1402, reiterated her role as mediator but assigns her guardianship of the government during the king's absences. Scholars have often regarded this ordinance as assigning real power to the queen. However, I believe that a serious transformation in her role occurs only with the ordinance abolishing regency of 1403.[99] The ordinance of July 1, 1402, continues to envision the queen as an arbitrator, not a leader.

Several factors point to this conclusion. The ordinance assigns the queen power in the following terms: "Elle pourverra bien, tant de l'apaisement de nozdiz oncle de Bourgoingne et frère d'Orleans, comme au gouvernement de noz dictes finances et aux autres grans besoingnes de nostredit royaume jusques à ce que nous y pourrons entendre en nostre personne." (She will provide for both the appeasing of our uncle of Burgundy and our brother of Orleans and the management of finances and other difficulties of the realm, until we can take care of them ourselves.)[100] The wording of the document (*tant* de l'apaisement . . . *comme* au gouvernement) specifies that the two tasks to which the queen is assigned are of equal weight. Mediating quarrels and presiding over a Royal Council that is already functioning can reasonably be seen as similar tasks; regency over the kingdom would imply a much higher level of authority than mediation.

Second, the dukes' combativeness during sessions of the Council and Isabeau's new attempts to deal with it are verified by a comment of Pintoin. The monk remarks that after the July 1 ordinance was passed, Isabeau and the Dukes of Berry and Bourbon forced Philip and Louis to abstain from coming to meetings of the council until the king regained his senses, because their quarreling prevented business from being accomplished.[101]

Third, in contrast with other documents granting regency to different queens during the absence of the king, the ordinance of July 1 is not concerned with the details of Isabeau's responsibilities. The lack of attention to the areas over which she will exercise authority suggests that she was viewed as a representative of the king rather than as a figure of authority with her own set of duties. One need only compare the ordinance of 1392 assigning Louis regency with that of 1402 outlining Isabeau's task. In contrast to the former, which enumerates very precisely the items over which Louis will possess jurisdiction, the latter simply notes that Isabeau will watch over things until Charles returns.[102] Also instructive is comparison of the ordinance of July 1, 1402, with one that clearly awarded specific regency powers to a queen. Called to war, Philip VI left his wife, Jeanne of Burgundy, in control of the kingdom.

> Et encores donnons en mandement par ces présentes Lettres, à noz amez & feauz Gens de nos Comptes, que de tous prestz, empruns & finances faiz & à faire par nostredite très-chiere Compaigne, desquelz il leur appaira par les Lettres de nostredite Compaigne, donnent & facent donner cedule ou escroe de nostre Trésor, à tout ceux qui les requerront, en re-

tenant les Lettres qu'il auront de nostredite Compaigne. . . . Et là où nostredite Compaigne verra que aucunes graces, proffit ou biensfaiz soient à faire à ceus qui à sa requeste auront fait ou feront & pourchaceront aides, prestz, dons ou finances pour nos guerres & besoignes devant dites, Nous donnons & ottroions à nostredite très-chiere Compaigne, plain povoir & autorité du faire, & de donner & ottroier privileges, franchises & Noblesces à Villes & Communitez & à singulieres personnes, à temps, à vie, ou à perpetuité; de rappeller bannissemens, tant de cas criminels comme civils; de remettre, quitter & pardonner toutes peinnes, mulctes, amendes, condempnations & fourfaitures.
[And again we make known by these letters to our friends and the faithful men of the accounts that of all loans and finances already made and yet to be made by our said very dear companion, which will come to them by letter from our said companion, that they give and create letters or rolls from our treasury, to whomever requests them, keeping the letters that they receive from our companion. . . . And where our companion sees that gifts, profits, or usufruct should be awarded to those who have, at her request, carried out or will carry out and pursue aides, loans, gifts, or finances for our wars and the needs mentioned above, we give and cede to our companion full power and authority to make and to give and to cede privileges, freedoms, and nobilities to towns and communities and to individual people, for a certain time, for life, or in perpetuity; to recall banishments, for both criminal and civil cases; to revoke, acquit, and pardon all penalties and fines, condemnations and forfeitures.][103]

Charles's ordinance demonstrates the king's confidence that the queen will carry on just as he would; he has no fear that she will do anything of which he would not approve. Governance of the realm was already being carried out by the Royal Council in the king's absence; the Council existed precisely to conduct business, and Isabeau was there as a moderator to allow work to be accomplished.[104]

A fourth reason to question whether the ordinance of July 1402 awards Isabeau real power is that the chroniclers would have noted a shift in power had they perceived one, yet they make no mention of an augmentation in the queen's powers. Instead, they continue to attribute governance of the realm to the dukes between 1402 and 1405. Indeed, Pintoin misunderstands what happens in the July 1 ordinance, claiming that one day when the Duke

of Orleans was otherwise occupied, the king summoned his Council and asked them whom they most like to see in charge during his absences. Their reply: "The Duke of Burgundy."[105] After soliciting the opinion of his Council, the king supposedly transferred power from his brother to his uncle by letters patent. The chronicle of Cousinot serves as another witness that a good portion of his contemporaries continued to regard Louis as the real head of the government during the period Isabeau supposedly held the position, assuming that the Duke of Orleans, "par la voulonté et ordonnance du roi, lui occuppé de maladie, avoit prééminence et autorité éz faiz du roi, de la royne et de leurs enffans, et représentant le roy, tenit l'éstat royal en grande haultesse" (by the will of the king, who is sick, had preeminence and authority for the deeds of the king, the queen, and their children, representing the king, and kept the royal state in great dignity).[106] Describing how a dispute of 1404 between the University of Paris and the Sire de Savoisy escalated to the point that a delegation from the university went seeking justice, Pintoin writes that they first presented their case to the queen, the princes, and especially the Duke of Orleans, who at the time had principal authority of the kingdom.[107] If Isabeau had been acting as regent in 1402 this would not have escaped the notice of the chroniclers so completely.

Finally, most important, Isabeau sat on the Royal Council only when the king was absent. Her power cannot have been comparable to that of Philip and Louis, who sat there permanently. Because of the king's health, the members of the Royal Council were the men of either Louis or Philip. Attached either to the House of Orleans or Burgundy by office or pension, the men of the Council presumably were amenable to arbitration by the queen, but they were loyal to their *seigneurs*.[108] Moreover, the system of *sénéchaux* and *baillis* that extended royal power throughout the kingdom was in the hands of the dukes of Orleans and Burgundy. Entering into a government composed of men loyal to one of two leaders, Isabeau could only oversee what was already taking place and try to manage conflicts. She was not a major player, head of her own faction, like Louis or Philip.

To sum up this discussion of the development of Isabeau's role to this point, I am suggesting that ordinances of 1402 designate her substitute for the king during his periods of madness. To continue the discussion of how her role evolved, I would like to argue against a common understanding of the relationship between the royal ordinances of 1402 and a new set promulgated in 1403. An ordinance of April 26, 1403, required that any decision Isabeau make be supported by a majority vote. Whereas the ordinance of

July 1, 1402, says only that she will make decisions with the aid of anyone she pleases to call on, that of 1403 specified that decisions will be made "par la plus grant et saine partie des voix" (the greatest part of the votes).[109]

Many scholars believe Isabeau's power to have been diminished by this ordinance. But a diminution of power assumes that Isabeau had exercised powers in 1402 that were taken from her in 1403. As I hope to have shown, however, her primary task was to mediate and preside over the Council. Thus there is no striking difference in her role before and after the ordinance of April 26. An ordinance of May 15 of the same year emphasizes once again the mediatory nature of the queen's role. In this ordinance, the king notes regretfully that he has alienated portions of his domain during his "absences." From now on, he orders that any gifts he might be inclined to give during his periods of incapacity must first be approved by the queen. The queen, Charles explains, is the person to whom "appartient garder le bien, prouffit de Nous & de nostre Royaume, & de noz Enfans, plus que à nul autre" (belongs the task of guarding the good, belonging to us and to our kingdom, and to our children, more than to any other).[110] The role of queen, in Charles's eyes, is to protect his kingdom when he cannot do so himself.

And yet, the ordinances of April 26, 1403, are truly significant, for one of them in effect withdraws the regency powers the king had assigned to Louis in 1393 in the case of a minority kingship. If the king died, the kingdom would have no regent. Rather, the new king would succeed immediately,

> sanz ce que aucun autre tant soit prouchain de nostre Sang entrepreigne le Bail, Régence ou Gouvernement de nostredit Royaume, & sanz ce qu'il puist estre donné nostre dit ainsné Filz en son droit qui lui est deu par droit de nature, aucun empeschement souz umbre de Régence ou Gouvernement de nostredit Royaume, ne autrement pour quelque raison que ce soit ou puist estre.
> [without anyone else, no matter how closely related, taking over the care, regency or government of our kingdom, and without any obstacle being put before our oldest son in the natural right that is due to him, through regency or government of our kingdom or for any reason whatsoever.][111]

Until the new king attained the age at which he could govern in his own person, all deliberations and conclusions would be carried out by the majority ("de la plus grant et saine partie") of the queen, the princes of the blood, and the Council.[112] The king had been "absent" nearly continuously since

the time of the previous ordinance, enjoying brief respites, from October 1 until October 12, 1402, and from February 18 through the beginning of April 1403.[113] At the beginning of April he slipped into a madness that lasted until April 25, when he reemerged and created the ordinance. The struggle for supremacy between the dukes had a reached a point such that a new means of preventing one or the other from seizing total control had to be discovered.

It must be noted that Louis fought this ordinance, and his fight seems to have been at least partially successful, for in a letter patent of May 7, 1403, the confused king acknowledged that "certain" recent ordinances may have been damaging to his brother, and that any portion of these recent ordinances that deprived Louis of his power was to be ignored.[114] The ordinance was not reinstated until immediately after Louis's assassination in 1407, and for the rest of his short life, the Duke of Orleans continued to be perceived as the head of the government by chroniclers.

Still, its very existence marks a turning point. In the absence of a regent, someone would still need to rule, and, although Charles assigned the task to a college, he unambiguously named the queen the head of the college. The ordinance thus suggests a recognition that a woman, motivated by her family feeling, might make a safer coregent than a man, who would necessarily be motivated by his own ambition. As I have noted, Isabeau's task would have been clearer had she been a widow and required to remain permanently in office. Nonetheless, with this ordinance, we see the for the first time an implicit example of female regency premised on the notion of the queen's devotion to her children and her inability to succeed to the throne, an inability that guaranteed her lack of ambition for power.

Governance during Charles's "absences," then, went through a number of phases of coregency. The earliest arrangements envisioned Louis as regent. This led to conflicts, which the king attempted to resolve by naming Isabeau official arbitrator in 1402. But the type of unofficial regency promulgated by the ordinances of April 1403 was clearly intended to remedy these problems by setting the queen up as a type of coregent with the king. The Royal Council would continue business as usual, the only difference being that the king would be represented by the queen. He was not *replaced* by a regent acting for him or herself. Indeed, the king added that no decision could be made without his being informed of it, as soon as he had regained his senses, at which point he would affirm (or not affirm) the decision with his seal: "sanz que toutes-voyes que aucuns appoinctemens prins sur lesdiz grans faiz, soient

mis à exécucion, sans le Nous faire premièrement savoir, & sanz nostre vouloir & consentement, & que les diz appoinctemens soient passez par noz Lettres séellées de nostre grant Séel" (no decisions made on important matters may be executed, without our being informed ahead of time, without our desire and consent, or without the decisions being recorded in letters stamped with our Great Seal).[115]

As Fanny Cosandey writes of the ordinance of April 1403, Charles finally decided to suppress the regency "telle qu'elle est exercée jusque-là—particulièrement au XIVe siècle—, à savoir avec un régent dont la puissance ne connaît pas de limites" (as it has been exercised until then—especially during the fourteenth century—that is, with a regent whose power had no limits) by what was in essence the elimination of minority.[116] Furthermore, the coregency envisioned by the ordinances of 1403 is reminiscent of the coregency of Blanche of Castile, with the difference that Blanche coruled with her son while Isabeau coruled with her husband. Although just before his death, Louis VIII had awarded Blanche full authority over the kingdom and her children, which means that her powers were in fact far greater than Isabeau's, she consistently styled herself and was styled as a coruler in the manner permitted by customary law.[117]

Isabeau occupied this role until she began to efface herself in favor of the dauphin. A royal ordinance of January 18, 1409, specified that when the queen was busy or did not want to involve herself in the business of the government, the dauphin Louis of Guyenne would see to the execution of decisions made by the Council. The queen would be informed of these decisions.[118] Less than a year later, on December 27, 1409, Isabeau had the Duke of Burgundy awarded *tutelle* of the dauphin, although she and the king maintained ultimate control over any decision made by Jean regarding his charge.[119]

In 1417, when the Armagnac-Burgundian conflict had been raging for years, Isabeau, delivered by Jean of Burgundy from her imprisonment by the Armagnacs, declared herself "aiant, pour l'occupacion de monseigneur le Roy, le gouvernement et administracion de royaume, par l'octroy irrevocable à nous sur ce fait par mondit seigneur et son grant conseil" (having, for the king, government, and administration of the kingdom, irrevocably granted to us by the king and his great Council).[120] In so doing, she referred back to the ordinance passed in 1403, construing—in retrospect—the charge to care for the government during the king's absences articulated within the document as full regency, a claim she had never pressed in the past.[121] Until that

moment, she had occupied an interstitial position that cannot be compared to the more straightforward regency position assumed by Louis and later by Jean sans Peur. Isabeau, like Blanche of Castile, cultivated an image of mediator, as guardian of the throne, and was never accused of usurping the king's power, in contrast to the king's male relatives.

Images of Mediation

In this final section, I discuss how Isabeau's role of mediator was supported and refined through imagery, written and visual. I begin with examples that show the queen as an intercessor or arbitrator and conclude with a discussion of how she invoked the Virgin to reinforce her position.

I have suggested that contemporary chroniclers do not always understand the full significance of Isabeau's role. Still, the figure that emerges from the chronicles tends to be that of a mediator, a producer of harmony. In 1390 a terrible storm rattled the city while the Royal Council sat deliberating the passage of new taxes, writes Pintoin. Suddenly four officers of the court were struck by lightning! Their bones were consumed; skin remained, but it was black. What could this be but a sign of God's disapproval of the taxes? The queen, "que proxima erat partui" (on the verge of giving birth), went trembling to seek the king, insisting that "hec inordinata aeris disposicio ex hoc malo procedebat" (this chaos in the pattern of the air was caused by this evil).[122]

The story as Pintoin recounts it may or may not be true, but the motif of the pregnant queen attempting to soften the king's treatment of his subjects was traditional, as we have seen. Pintoin depicts Isabeau mediating in the same way in 1401. On this occasion she has also been frightened by terrible thunder, presumably sent once again by an irate God. Suddenly, lightning consumed the curtains of her bed and exited via the chimney. Imagining that God was pouring anger down upon the people of France, she sent offerings to several churches in the kingdom to appease divine fury.[123]

Before turning to chronicle passages that depict the queen in the midst of diplomatic negotiation, that is, quite literally mediating, let us mention a final example of her symbolic value as arbitrator, one which I will discuss in detail in chapter five. This is her involvement in the poetic society known as the Cour amoureuse. The purpose of this organization, as stated in its founding charter, was "l'honneur, loenge, recommandacion et service de toutes dames et damoiselles (honor, praise, recommendation, and service toward

all ladies), manifested in the love poetry that the members (who had to be male) would present in contests.[124] Although ladies could not be members of the Cour amoureuse, they would evaluate the entries and choose a winner. The institution, created in the beginning years of what was shaping up to be a catastrophic feud, must also have been intended as a means of articulating and ordering the passions that eventually led to violence as a means of symbolically dramatizing and working out tensions. Typically, Isabeau can be found both at the center and on the margins of political activity. Her role in the Cour amoureuse followed the same pattern. She was essential—ladies are the judges—and yet she was excluded from membership—only men could compete. Thus the Cour amoureuse can be seen as an emblem for the position of women in fifteenth-century French society and for the role of the mediator queen.

Isabeau is described in the literal act of mediating in certain chronicles, as well. One text, the propagandistic Burgundian chronicle, *Le Livre des trahisons envers la maison de Bourgogne,* recounting events of September 1410, dramatizes her at the bargaining table, trying to persuade the League of Gien, led by the king's uncle Jean of Berry, to leave Jean sans Peur alone. The chronicle is undoubtedly biased against the Orleanists, but as far as the queen in concerned, it views her positively in her role as a mediator. Although she was very unpopular with the Burgundians in 1404 and 1405, by 1410 she had reached a temporary peace with Jean sans Peur. The Count of Saint-Pol and some presidents of the Parlement, we read, left Paris "aveuc la roynne en noble, riche et puissant arroy, et chevauchièrent vers Montlhéry" (with the queen in a noble, rich, and powerful array and rode toward Montlhéry).[125] When Jean sans Peur and his entourage discovered that she had arrived, they mounted their horses and went out to greet her. They feted her grandly and led her to their hostels and lodgings.

The queen is then portrayed gathering the Armagnac princes together and assuring them that she is there to hear their explanations of why they are threatening Paris:

> Messigneurs, chy nous envoye devers vous, premiers le roy, monsigneur de Guienne, beau cousin de Bourgongne, le duc de Brabant et le noble conseil du roy et de la bonne ville de Paris, pour sçavoir de vous pour quelles raisons vous venés sy près de Paris à force et à puissance, et à quoy vous entendés de les enbesongnier; et s'il vous plet à le nous dire, nous le reporterons au roy et au dessus déclairiés, lesquelx sont moult désirans de sçavoir quel cause à vous meut.

[Messieurs, I have been sent here to you, by the king, the Duke of Guyenne, my cousin of Burgundy, the Duke of Brabant, the Royal Council of the king, and the city of Paris, to discover your reasons for coming so close to Paris with force and power, and what you intend to do with them. If you will be so good as to tell me, I will report it to the king and those declared above, who want very much to know what cause motivates you.][126]

To the Duke of Berry who informed her that the reason that he and his men have surrounded Paris is that Louis of Orleans' death has never been avenged, Isabeau responds *doucement* (gently) that in fact both the king and his Council had been satisfied with Jean sans Peur's administration and that he had put the ruined state back in order.[127] Still, the Duke of Berry refuses to return peacefully to Paris as long as Jean sans Peur is there. In the face of this stubbornness, it is agreed that everyone will return to his own land and that from that point on the king and the kingdom will be governed by the Three Estates, with a truce between the Armagnacs and the Burgundians.[128]

This conclusion of events is of course a fantasy of Jean sans Peur, who had long preached government by the Three Estates, confident of his ability to control them. Other chroniclers recount the queen's mediation on this same occasion, but they end the story differently. Pintoin notes that the queen tried to persuade the League to desist for five days without success.[129] Monstrelet reports a similar result: that the queen was not able to establish peace, although she tried throughout September, and that she eventually abandoned the cause as futile. As Monstrelet explains, "Et pour ce ladcite Royne se parçeut qu'elle traveilloit en vain, retourna à Paris avec sa compaignie, et racompta ce qu'elle avoit trouvé" (And for this reason, the queen understood that she was working in vain and returned to Paris with her company and recounted what she had discovered).[130] When Isabeau returned to Paris, she announced the lack of results to the king, who was outraged and troubled.

In the chronicles the queen is also frequently depicted riding in a procession to celebrate a newly negotiated peace. After the publication of the peace, a step Offenstadt has recognized as a ritualistic element of such proceedings, the principal actors often took to the streets in parades that invited the crowds to participate and rejoice in the event.[131] The chroniclers report the reactions of the crowds, wild with joy, to such public performances. The excitement of the crowds apparently approached delirium at times. For example, Pintoin describes the procession that followed the Peace of Auxerre in

1412. Louis, the dauphin, entered Paris the last week of September, accompanied by his cousin, the Count of Vertus, brother of Charles of Orleans, and behind them, the Dukes of Burgundy and Bourbon. The queen entered three days later. About her entrance Pintoin writes: "Nundum exacto triduo, plebs universa reginam venerabilem iterum ingredientem suscepit et cum tanta exuberanti leticia, ut laudes sibi regias acclamarent, ac si suscepissent regem qui de adversariis regnis triumphasset." (Three days later, the entire people again received the entering venerable queen and acclaimed her with such exuberant joy, such royal laud, it was as if they were receiving a king returning to the realm from triumphing over enemies.)[132]

Yet another image, this time from the chronicle of Juvénal des Ursins, depicts the queen as mediator. Here it is Isabeau who represents herself as such. In a letter of 1411 to the queen, Jean sans Peur refers to one which he had recently received from her. The document no longer exists, but we can glean its contents from Jean's remarks. You tell me, he writes, that "vous avez continuellement besongné sur le faict qu'il a pleu à monseigneur le Roy vous ordonner, touchant l'appaisement des divisions en ce royaume. Et aviez esperance en Dieu, que briefvement aucun bon appointement y seroit trouvé" (you have worked continually on the task that it pleased monseigneur the King to assign you, regarding the divisions in this kingdom. And that you had hope in God that soon some good solution would be found).[133] Jean goes on to acknowledge that the queen has sent missives to him and his adversaries requesting them not to take up arms, because to do so would greatly anger the king and show "peu d'honneur" (little honor) to her, negotiations being in her hands.[134]

The Isabeau who emerges so fleetingly through the words of Jean's letter, it seems to me, represents the epitome of the queen carrying out her role as mediator. Effaced and effacing, she works tirelessly to bring quarrelsome men to heel with only her moral authority to support her interventions. Her position is both central and marginal, for while she answers to the king and God himself, she has no army to summon to enforce her mandate that the dukes lay down their arms. All she can do is request that the adversaries not anger the king or cause her dishonor.

An important example from Pintoin demonstrates another instance of Isabeau's being styled as mediator: in this case, he reveals that the queen's position was compared to that of Blanche of Castile by her contemporaries. The reference occurs on September 5, 1408, when Isabeau had just returned to Paris from about twenty-five miles south of the city in Melun, where she

had retreated after the justification of the assassination of Louis of Orleans read by Jean Petit on behalf of Jean sans Peur. On that day, Pintoin relates, Isabeau met with the Royal Council to determine how best to manage the Duke of Burgundy. Shaken by Jean's recent successes, the Council deemed that it was in the best interests of the kingdom that Isabeau continue in her current position, as its head. Afterward, writes Pintoin, Juvénal des Ursins, the queen's lawyer, reminded a gathering of the princes of the blood, prelates, and the people through a proclamation that the queen and her son had been attributed sovereign powers by the king. Pintoin then adds an important detail about this discourse: Juvénal des Ursins presented as one of the reasons for the king's decision to accord power to the queen that Blanche of Castile had prudently ruled the kingdom with her son: "quam prudenter quamque potenter domina quondam Blancha cum parvulo filio sancta memorie Ludovico regnum Francie rexisset." (that once Blanche had prudently and powerfully ruled the kingdom of France with her small son, Louis of holy memory).[135] To make Isabeau's case, Juvénal des Ursins implicitly evokes the lack of menace Isabeau presents as a coregent, in contrast to Jean, who, backed by his army, threatened the king.

Beyond these textual remnants of Isabeau's status as mediator, she is explicitly associated with that ultimate model of female mediation, the Virgin Mary, through visual imagery, on several occasions. This occurs for the first time during her entrance into Paris and coronation in August 1389, four years after her marriage. As Gordon Kipling writes, during these ceremonies, the king, or, in this case, the queen, "and citizens perform their roles in a microcosmal drama of the supernatural order as they understand it. The civic drama in which they play together constitutes a kind of 'material embodiment' of an ideal political order, and by performing it, they shape their imperfect world into at least a rough approximation of that ideal."[136] The coronation ceremony was carefully designed to elaborate for the public the queen's role as a mediator. Structured so as to stress her inferiority to the king, the ceremony assured the public of her accessibility, that is, of her mediatory position, between the king and the people. Cosandey explains:

> A l'apogée des honneurs, la reine se voit donc signifier des restrictions par son sacre même, marquant son infériorité politique et juridique face au souverain. Parce qu'elle est une femme, parce qu'elle est sa femme, parce que, reine, elle est néanmoins sujette du roi, elle occupe une place intermédiaire entre le souverain et ses sujets, étant associée à l'un et aux

autres. Cette situation ambiguë, mal définie même par les jurisconsultes, se reflète encore dans la cérémonie du sacre dont le déroulement prend soin de notifier cette ambivalence.

[At the height of her honors, the queen signifies restrictions in the very consecration ceremony, which marked her political and juridical inferiority before the sovereign. Because she is a woman, because she is his wife, because, queen, she is nonetheless subject to the king, she occupies an intermediary position between the king and his subjects, being associated with the one and the other. This ambiguous situation, badly defined even by legal advisors, is reflected again in the coronation ceremony the procedure of which is at pains to make this ambivalence noticeable.][137]

The ceremony, according to Cosandey, recalls and affirms that the queen is royal (she is consecrated during the coronation ceremony). Still, she is not the king. Therefore, she does not receive his spiritual attributes: she does not receive his pontifical robes or ointment from the holy ampoule. Also, she is anointed in only two spots, on the head and chest, in contrast with the king's nine. As for secular symbols of power, she receives a ring, sceptre, hand of justice, and crown, but not the grand sceptre with the fleur-de-lis.[138] Also, as we saw above, queens were explicitly associated with the Virgin and Esther as well as with other biblical heroines during their coronation.

Pintoin explains that because Charles VI desired that his wife's coronation conform to tradition, he requested that the venerable Blanche, Duchess of Orleans, and the kingdom's expert on tradition, search the tomes of Saint Denis for information on past examples.[139] Therefore, we can assume that Isabeau's celebration contained the references to Esther and the Virgin mentioned above. But in addition to the traditional elements that played an important role in the ceremony, coronations created individual ways of representing the queen's role for the public, as Cosandey has pointed out.[140] Isabeau was the first queen of France to be crowned separately from the king; he himself had already been crowned before his 1385 marriage, shortly after his accession to the throne in 1380.[141] Charles had proclaimed himself free of his uncles' *tutelle* just eleven months before the coronation. It looks, therefore, as if the coronation were motivated at least in part to express a message about the reign of Charles and Isabeau: to speak to the Parisians in a new language, to signal to his kingdom the dawn of a new era of concord and prosperity.[142] Bernard Ribémont writes that with Isabeau's entry and coronation, "la politique monarchique s'affiche comme politique

de dialogue et d'harmonie" (monarchical politics shows its interest in dialogue and harmony).[143]

Through a traditional set of iconography that constructed the queen as a mediator, Isabeau was presented to the people as a presence capable of creating union among disparate elements. Central to this iconography was the queen's association with the Virgin. Gordon Kipling suggests that Isabeau's entry into Paris during her coronation ceremony created an array of parallels between the queen's entry into Paris and the Virgin's Assumption into heaven."[144] "The show," he continues, "first of all, took place on the octave Sunday of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, a date which could only enforce the deliberate parallel between Isabella's entry into Paris and the Virgin's entry into heaven. Just as an octave Sunday constitutes a second commemoration of a feast, so Queen Isabella's entry could be seen as a second commemoration of the Virgin's Assumption." During her entry, Isabeau followed a path that brought to life parallels with the Virgin Mary. As the queen passed through the *Porte-aux-peintres,* two angels descended to lay a crown upon her head, proclaiming her the queen of paradise.[145] Above the gate of Saint Denis rose a Virgin with child (as Kipling points out, Isabeau was heavily pregnant during the entry), backed by the sun, heraldic device of Charles VI.

I would like to examine in more detail the pageant resting upon the Porte-aux-peintres from which descended the crown-bearing angels, because I believe that Isabeau later incorporates the symbolic language of these angels into an important image of herself as mediator. Froissart describes the queen and her procession winding their way toward this gate, which was topped by a representation of a castle surrounded by the heavens and God presiding over all in majesty. As the party passed through the gate, "le paradis s'ouvry, et deux angèles yssirent hors en eulx avalant et tenoient en leurs mains une très-riche couronne d'or garnie de pierres précieuses, et la mirent et assirent les deux angèles moult doulcement sur le chief de la royne en chantant" (paradise opened, and two angels came out descending upon them and holding in their hands a very rich crown decorated with precious stones, and the two angels set it on the head of the queen, singing).[146] Later, during her coronation ceremony, which took place at the cathedral of Notre Dame, after the queen had mounted the altar, she knelt and prayed. In a lovely gesture, she then "donna et offry à la trésorie de Nostre-Dame quatre draps d'or et la belle couronne que les angèles luy avoient posé sur le chief à la porte de Paris" (gave and offered to the treasury of Notre Dame four cloths of gold

and the beautiful crown that the angels had placed on her head at the gate of Paris), in recognition of her submission of her own power to a higher one.[147]

The important point, I believe, is the detail that Isabeau is crowned queen of paradise by two angels. The motif of the Triumph of the Virgin, that is, her crowning, became popular as of the late twelfth century.[148] One finds the Virgin Mary, crowned and seated beside her son on the gable of the central portal of the Rheims Cathedral, on the tympanum of the west façade of the Senlis Cathedral, and on the central tympanum of the west façade of the Laon Cathedral. Another very well-known example of the motif decorates the north portal middle tympanum carving of the Chartres Cathedral. This particular manifestation of the motif is associated with Blanche of Castile because it is echoed in a *Bible moralisée* held today at the Pierpont Morgan Library. The *Bible moralisée* famously portrays Blanche in precisely the same position as the Virgin of Chartres, seated upon a throne adjoining that of her son, the future Saint Louis, motioning toward him, her hands in the advocate position.[149] The coronation of the Virgin as depicted on the Cathedral of Chartres shows Mary already crowned; her crown rests upon her head, placed there one assumes by the angel who floats just above her. But in the design of the north portal of the western façade of Notre Dame of Paris, also known as the Porte Rouge, the angel actually places the crown on the head of the Virgin.[150]

I would suggest that Isabeau's crowning by angels as she proceeded along the road that led her eventually to her coronation at Notre Dame would have created a particularly strong visual link between the physical queen of France and the Virgin crowned by an angel on the portal of that cathedral. The relationship between Isabeau and the Virgin would have been further reinforced when the procession reached the cathedral later in the day. The queen and the Dukes of Berry, Burgundy, Touraine (Louis of Orleans), and Bourbon, descended and made their way down the aisle, accompanied by the queen's ladies and led by the archbishop and the clergy, all singing "haut et cler à la loenge de Dieu et de la Vierge Marie" (high and clearly in praise of God and the Virgin Mary).[151]

As Kipling demonstrates, queens who followed Isabeau were routinely associated with the Virgin during their entries. That Anne of Brittany, twice queen of France, from 1491–98, and then again from 1498–1514, was associated with the Virgin has long been recognized.[152] As for Isabeau's particular use of the imagery, I would suggest that later in her career after the

serious difficulties of Charles's reign had begun, she reactivates the symbolic language of her crowning by angels along with that gesture's reference to the Virgin of the north portal of the western façade of Notre Dame to make a visual argument for herself as mediator. At the moment of her coronation, Isabeau certainly would have envisioned nothing more for her future than serving the king and the people as an intercessor. The king's madness, of course, changed that. I believe that Isabeau represents herself carrying out the role with which she was charged because of Charles's debility in the form of a New Year's gift, an *étrenne,* the figure known as the *Goldenes Rössl,* which she commissioned for the king in 1405. The political situation at that moment was especially difficult: Jean sans Peur had recently become Duke of Burgundy and was trying to appropriate for himself a major role in the government. This *étrenne,* I would suggest, refers back to Isabeau's crowning by angels, telling Charles in symbolic language of her commitment to watching over him and the kingdom.

The *Goldenes Rössl* is a 62-centimeter-high golden tabernacle decorated in *émail en ronde bosse.*[153] It regroups three spaces, hierarchically arranged. At the summit, the Virgin with child sits beneath a jewel-encrusted arbor. She is about to be crowned by two angels who float over her head. Three child-saints, whose attributes identify them as John the Evangelist, John the Baptist, and Saint Catherine, but who because of their names have been associated with Isabeau and Charles' own children, Jean and Catherine, born in 1398 and 1401, kneel before the Virgin, emphasizing her maternal qualities.[154] Behind the Virgin blazes a sun, perhaps a reference to Charles' heraldic device, as featured in that same pageant from which descended the angels during Isabeau's coronation. Below them, on the middle tier, a kneeling Charles VI gazes up at the Virgin, his hands folded in prayer. Just across from him kneels an unidentified knight, representing perhaps the recently deceased Philip of Burgundy (his face is creased with wrinkles). Below the king and his companion, on the lowest of the three tiers, a different knight holds the bridle of Charles's horse.

The *Goldenes Rössl,* I would suggest, eloquently incarnates the argument by which Isabeau and her supporters authorized the queen's position in the government. Although Queen of Heaven, Mary was necessarily coruler with her son, never an all-powerful regent. With the incessant disputes over power during the king's absences constantly threatening to explode into outright war, the *Goldenes Rössl* reminds Charles that peace can be brought about by a female mediator, a woman surrounded by children, holding the true ruler

on her knee. Certainly the figure represents the Virgin Mary, not Isabeau, but in a climate where the figure of mediator so persistently partook of the earthly and the divine and in a kingdom where the problem of regency was so acute, the *Goldenes Rössl* with its depiction of Mary coreigning with her son could not have helped but evoke the queen. The *Goldenes Rössl* is a quiet reminder of the role of mediator that Isabeau assumed with her coronation, a role spelled out in the coronation *ordo* and rendered visual in her coronation by angels along the way to Notre Dame.

I conclude this chapter with a reference to an image without which no discussion of the iconography associated with Isabeau would be complete: that of folio 3 recto of Harley 4431 of the British Library, known as the Queen's Manuscript, presented to the queen by Christine de Pizan in January 1414, shortly after peace had been restored following the Cabochian revolt.[155] Christine had already dedicated a work to the queen a decade earlier, the collected letters of the *Querelle de la Rose*. These letters contained the poet's own vigorous defense of the feminine character against the misogynistic discourse promulgated in the *Roman de la Rose*. In this dedication, Christine offered the work to the "Tres Noble Excellence" who delights in hearing well-expressed stories of virtuous things ("se delicte a oïr lire dittiéz de choses vertueuses et bien dictes").[156] In offering this work to Isabeau, Christine drew the queen into the group of righteous women slandered by misogynistic discourse, constructing her both as a victim of that discourse and as a defender of women, a figure both inside and outside that discourse, by virtue of her exceptional role, and therefore an ideal mediator.

As for the opening miniature of Isabeau in Harley 4431, the queen sits surrounded by her ladies, receiving the volume from the hands of the poet. This miniature, I would suggest, echoes that which illustrates the final book of Christine's *Cité des dames*. The *Cité des dames* had originally been composed in 1405, but it was one of the works collected within this deluxe manuscript. Book three of the *Cité des dames* relates how the Virgin Mary is installed as the leader of the City of Ladies. On the first folio of book three, a miniature depicts the allegorical figure Justice welcoming the Virgin Mary and her entourage of haloed saints into the city. In the text of the story, Justice introduces Mary to the inhabitants of the City of Ladies with the line I referred to above, as "she who is not only their queen, but who has dominion and administration after her only son." The miniature just above the text depicts Justice with hands outstretched toward Mary, who carries a book in her own hands. The image of Isabeau in her chamber, receiving the book

offered to her by the kneeling Christine and surrounded by her ladies, takes on increased prestige as an echo of the image of Mary and her party; the parallel between the two queens and their circles makes another striking argument in support of Isabeau in her role as mediator queen, the presence behind the dauphin, who at the very moment was beginning to show himself a force to be reckoned with in the aftermath of the Cabochian revolt.

Isabeau's Contemporary Reputation

Durant toutes ces années, en effet, les maîtres parisiens se déchaînent contre elle, s'en prenant pêle-mêle à son train de vie, à son entourage féminin, aux moeurs dissolues de sa cour (la décadence des moeurs, c'est à cause d'elle), à sa rapacité (les levées d'impôts, c'est pour elle), au peu de cas qu'elle fait des ses enfants (leur mort prematurée, c'est toujours elle), à son indifférence face à la maladie du roi (l'aspect déplorable de ce dernier—il refuse de s'habiller et de se laver pendant ses crises—, c'est encore elle). A quoi s'ajoute, après l'assassinat de Louis d'Orléans, une accusation d'adultère avec le nouveau duc de Bourgogne.
[During these years, the Parisian masters raged against her, ranting about her lifestyle, her female entourage, the dissolute morals of her court (the decadence of morals was her fault), her rapacity (taxes were her fault), her lack of interest in her children (their premature death was always her fault), her indifference regarding the king's illness (the deplorable appearance of the latter—he refused to dress himself or wash during his crises—her fault again). Add to all this the accusation of adultery with the new Duke of Burgundy after the assassination of Louis of Orleans.]

Pierre Cochon, né dans le pays de Caux, qui a très peu voyagé, répétant dans sa chronique ce qu'il a entendu dire dans sa jeunesse, est plein de rancunes à l'égard du duc d'Orléans, de la reine, de la duchesse d'Orléans: il leur reproche d'avoir voulu renverser le roi, d'avoir été les auteurs de sa maladie, car, "disoit le peupple qu'il estoit sain ou malade quant monsieur d'orlyens voulloit; " d'avoir désiré enfin "à avoir taillez et à destruire le royaume et en avoir par devers eux toute la finance."
[Pierre Cochon, who was born in the region of Caux and traveled very little, repeating in his chronicle what he had heard in his youth, is filled with resentment toward the Duke of Orleans, the queen, and the Duchess of Orleans: he reproaches them for wanting to dethrone the king, for being the authors of the king's illness, for, "the people said that he was healthy or sick when Monsieur of Orleans so wished;" for wanting finally to tax the kingdom into destruction and in one year to have taken all of the money.]

The assumption that Isabeau was detested by her contemporaries, especially the Parisians, is so firmly established that even her recent champions assume that long before her involvement in the Treaty of Troyes she was intensely disliked by the "people," or at least that around 1405 her good name was seriously impugned because of her association with Louis of Orleans.[1] This assumption has hindered our ability to perceive her accomplishments as a mediator queen. Even sympathetic readings of the queen's career must view it as unsuccessful to the extent that her contemporaries despised her. But there are sound reasons to believe that her unpopularity is simply part of her black legend. In this chapter, I argue that a careful examination of contemporary evidence turns up nothing to support the common belief that the queen was a target of vicious rumors or *mala fama*. When one checks the sources of scholars who claim Isabeau to have been widely slandered, one discovers that many give none at all. The first introductory passage to this chapter provides one such example. Other sources turn out not to support Isabeau's unpopularity when one follows the footnotes. This is the case with the second introductory passage. Although Alfred Coville, the author of the passage, asserts that chronicler Pierre Cochon was filled with resentment for the queen, when one reads the pages of the Beaurepaire edition of Cochon that Coville cites in his note, that is, pages 191, 192, 204, 214, 220, and 244, one discovers only one reference to Isabeau, on page 204. The story recounted there tells how Louis, the queen, and the Duke of Berry imposed a *taille* which was disavowed by the Duke of Burgundy. If one continues on to page 205, one discovers that the *taille* was subsequently withdrawn. But there is no mention of Isabeau's popularity or lack thereof; nor is there any mention at all of popular reaction to the *taille*.

As I noted in the introduction, the notion that Isabeau was uniquely disliked derives from two primary sources of roughly the same period. The first is the chronicle of Pintoin for the year 1405. The second is the anonymous pamphlet in verse known as the "Songe véritable," composed circa 1406, possibly by a member of the University of Paris and certainly by a supporter of Jean sans Peur.[2] The "Songe veritable" deplores excessive spending by a number of figures closely associated with the royal family. While these two sources do seem, on the surface, to suggest that Isabeau lost her popularity with the public in 1405, each yields a different story when it is contextualized. Rather than evidence of widespread of contemporary infamy, I argue that these two sources should be regarded as attacks of one faction upon the other. Such attacks as these two, only to be expected in the midst of a feud,

say much about the strategies of the small group of attackers but nothing about the attitudes of the wider population. The proper conclusion to draw from the attacks, I suggest, is that they actually indicate that the queen was highly regarded. That the Burgundians, the faction waging the attacks, target her along with men holding real power indicates that they considered her influence to be comparable to that of the king's closest advisors. Given her proximity to power and the medieval propensity to cast women as lightning rods for social problems, one would expect her to be criticized regularly and violently. Thus the minimal criticism directed at her in fact bespeaks the high esteem in which she was held rather than the contrary. Finally, I argue that the while the "Songe véritable" is undoubtedly intended to demoralize the queen, the work's referencing of itself as a vehicle for destroying her reputation suggests that it must be considered as evidence for her popularity rather than the contrary. Why would the Burgundians need to destroy the good name of a queen who was already unpopular?

The Theme of Financial Reform

But before examining the criticisms of Pintoin and the "Songe véritable," it is important to create a context for the type of complaint they represent. Here two points are important. First, my initial point, that modern scholarship has a tendency to draw without adequate evidence the conclusion that Isabeau was a particular target of criticism, requires further substantiation. A series of examples will make the point.

According to one historian writing on the Cabochian revolt, on May 22, 1413, crowds invaded the gardens of the Hôtel Saint Pol as Eustache Pavilly approached the recently recovered king on behalf of the *prévôt des marchands* and the *échevins* to inform him that certain of his officers and servants had been arrested and removed from his household. Pavilly explains why this had been done. The king must not consider these acts an attack on his royal majesty, Pavilly insists. Rather, the acts have been deemed necessary to eradicate the "mauvais herbes" (bad weeds) crowding the royal garden. The historian then moves on to a discussion of the dauphin, Louis of Guyenne. On that same day the dauphin was badly handled by the crowds. This was because the young man had become the "bête noire" of the Cabochians, the historian explains. Finally, the historian turns to the queen. A list of bad weeds was read before the queen, the historian continues. Then a group from her entourage, including her brother, was plucked from the gar-

den, so speak. Just like the king, the queen was deprived of some of her servants and household. The historian thus demonstrates that the queen was treated in precisely the same manner as the king. Neither was deemed personally responsible for the realm's financial disaster. In both instances, "bad weeds" are plucked from the royal gardens and thrown into prison.

And yet, far from pointing out this similarity of treatment, the historian encourages the reader to assume that the queen was a special target of the crowd's wrath. Isabeau, asserts the historian, "aussi est impopulaire et la foule en veut à son frère." ([The queen] is also unpopular [a reference to the unpopularity of the dauphin Louis of Guyenne] and the crowd is angry with her brother.)[3] As we have just seen, the evidence that the historian presents in support of these conclusions suggests nothing of the sort. Clearly if the evidence offered can be said to prove Isabeau's unpopularity, so must it prove the king's, but the historian does not forward this. There is never any question of the king's being disliked by the "people" in any of the contemporary chronicles. And of course he was not, or at least historical records do not indicate this to have been the case. Indeed, he was nicknamed "Le bien aimé," the well loved.[4]

Other examples of this tendency to treat Isabeau as uniquely disliked abound. Immediately before the Cabochian revolt, the university and city of Paris jointly produced a series of *remonstrances* on the government of the realm. There we find complaints against the households, first, of the king's, followed by the dauphin's, and the queen's.[5] And yet, modern historians routinely describe Isabeau as the target of the *remonstrances* without mentioning that the document deals with her household exactly as it deals with the king's. The same is true of the Cabochian ordinance itself. The mandates dealing with the expenses of the hotel of the king are followed by "et pour les hostelz de la Royne et du daulphin."[6] There is no justification for seeing the ordinances as targeting the queen.

In a similar vein, a scholar claims of the "Songe véritable" that the poem "peut écrire, sous la fiction du songe, une très violente diatribe contre Isabeau de Bavière et ses conseillers, et même imaginer de quels horribles châtiments ils seront frappés" (writes under the cover of the fiction of a dream vision a violent diatribe against Isabeau of Bavaria and her counselors and even imagines the terrible chastisements awaiting them).[7] The comment leaves the impression that Isabeau is the main object of the poem's fury. However, this is not true. First, the other characters who figure in the poem—Louis of Orleans, the king's brother, Jean of Berry, his uncle, and Jean de

Montaigu, his *maître d'hôtel*—cannot be construed as Isabeau's counselors. They were, rather, in the first two instances, princes of the blood, who sat on the Royal Council: their position might be understood as one of counselor to the king, but not of counselor to Isabeau. It is also important to note that in the poem, Isabeau follows the three other main characters in order of appearance, suggesting that her function, like theirs, is one of counselor to the king. Furthermore, she is not even included in the vivid verse description of the infernal pains awaiting these three principal characters, contrary to what the article asserts. The queen seems a bit of an afterthought, included almost reluctantly and spared the invective heaped on the others.

We might also cite Yann Grandeau's assessment that "Isabeau de Bavière devient la cible privilégiée de toutes les attaques. On murmure contre les nobles, on crie des insultes à l'Etrangère. La rumeur publique dénonce ses forfaits, lui prête des amants, l'accuse de négliger son époux, ses fils." (Isabeau of Bavaria becomes the special target of all attacks. There was grumbling about the nobility and loud insults shouted at the Foreigner. Public rumor denounced her expenses, attributed her lovers, accused her of neglecting her husband and her sons.)[8] The only evidence Grandeau cites, however, is the "Songe veritable" and the sections from Pintoin, which I discuss in this chapter. Once again, the same two sources, uncritically accepted as evidence of widespread dislike, are woven into a modern historical narrative of popular hatred.

The second important point for contextualizing a discussion of Isabeau's reputation is that complaints of financial mismanagement are ubiquitous throughout the Middle Ages and almost entirely unrelated to actual levels of spending. To understand the significance of these criticisms, it is necessary to recall that the theme of "purifying" the realm by cracking down on corrupt officials first became common during the time of Louis IX in the thirteenth century. Outraged at the corruption of the officers assigned to collect revenues for the king, the people voiced their discontent, and Louis IX responded: he "carefully articulated the standards of administrative culture at court and in the government and kingdom at large."[9] In the process, he also established a rhetoric that would henceforth be associated with reform. "Afin de maîtriser le zèle de ses officiers, et pour répondre aux plaintes," writes Jacques Krynen, "Saint Louis avait entrepris la correction des abus provoqués par l'administration bailliagère. Le vocable de réforme, *reformatio,* d'un usage ancien, s'identifie alors à la nécessité de discipliner les agissements d'agents royaux par trop envahissants. (To overcome the zeal of his officers and respond to complaints, Saint Louis had attempted to correct the abuses aris-

ing from the administration of the *baillis*. The word for reform, *reformatio,* of ancient usage, became identified with the necessity of keeping the too-invasive royal agents in line.)[10] Under Philip the Fair, Krynen continues, ordinances for reformation of the finances became regular. The *Magna statuta* of 1303 was so popular that it was renewed twenty-four times before the reign of Charles V.[11]

But Raymond Cazelles contrasts the early usage of the reform theme, when it arose in response to a genuine need to restrain abusive royal agents, with that of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, when it was trotted out and applied indiscriminately during any and all discussion of taxes.[12] By the mid-fourteenth century, it had become impossible to deny that taxation was vital to the functioning of the kingdom. C. D. Fletcher observes that "the plea of common necessity had been established as an irresistible argument."[13] Warfare had become more complex and costly to wage from the mid-fourteenth century on than it had been during the time of Saint Louis. The wars against England strained the royal treasury and had to be augmented by "extraordinary" taxes, called military aides. These military aides then created a source of money on which the increasingly bureaucratized government came to rely and that continued to be collected, even in times of peace.

However, the fact that taxes were necessary to sustain the militaristic and bureaucratic needs of fourteenth-century government could not be accommodated within traditional notions of kingship. The medieval king, a powerful lord, existed to protect the rights of his subjects and, when these were violated, to wage war against the perpetrators. "In the middle ages the ideal prince was an armed judge—a force useful to society primarily as an arbiter and as a protector of feudal, natural, and divine law," writes Martin Wolfe.[14] This meant, as Wolfe continues, that people of the Middle Ages "did not regard royal revenues as contributions by participants in a commonwealth to expenditures that would increase the well-being of the people. They thought of the fisc as a householding operation, intended to support the royal family in proper style and to provide a small surplus which, when husbanded as it should be, would provide funds for emergency military affairs."[15] A rift had developed between the traditional notion of taxation as extraordinary help granted to a king in need of money for military purposes and the real uses to which taxes were put. But the traditional notion remained, mystifying the actual situation, because no one imagined taxation as a potentially positive means of building the economy.

This gap in the mental representation of taxation and the reality of the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century French economy meant that resistance to taxation continued to be waged under the form of complaints that the actions of royal governments were not directed toward the common good, explains Fletcher.[16] Furthermore, charges of corruption were raised opportunistically to create anger that could be directed against a political rival whenever taxes were imposed. Compounding the problem was royal collusion: kings felt guilty about levying taxes. Regarding them as vaguely shameful, kings periodically abolished various sorts to arouse public approval or to appease their own consciences.[17] His guilt over taxing his subjects got the better of Charles V on his deathbed: he abolished the *fouage,* which accounted for 30 to 40 percent of his revenues. This was despite the fact that these revenues had enabled Charles V "to make substantial gifts to his brothers, important nobles, and high officials" and "to subsidize a luxurious standard of living for his brothers."[18] By revoking the *fouage,* the king created serious difficulties for the early years of the reign of Charles VI; Charles M. Radding writes that "scholars have not been sufficiently aware of the sharp drop in royal income that followed the death of Charles V."[19]

Also insufficiently noted is that revolts against taxation were not unique to Charles VI's reign, but occurred under the watch of the wise Charles V, as well. A major popular revolt took place in 1357. A reaction to the debacle of the Battle of Poitiers, involving Amiens, Toulouse, and Lavaur in 1357, followed by Paris, Ile-de-France, Laon, Rouen, Normandy, Villefranche-sur-Saône, Belleville, and others in 1358, it was eventually subdued by Charles, who was then the dauphin. A second major revolt occurred in the same areas starting in 1379, breaking out just before the death of Charles V and continuing on into the reign of the uncles, during Charles VI's minority.[20] Thus the Cabochian revolt of 1413 had precedents in the reign of Charles V. Krynen notes that the three revolts

> ont surtout en commun d'avoir été suscités par l'action d'un Etat contraint, parce que pressé par la guerre et desservi par une déplorable gestion fiscale, de lever de nouveaux impôts. En outre, particulièrement en 1356–1358 et en 1412–1418, le refus des populations et la révolte s'accompagnent d'une profonde aspiration à la "réformation" du royaume, encouragée par la propagande des meneurs du mouvement.
> [have above all in common that they were incited by the action of a State forced, because pressed by war and badly served by deplorable fiscal

management, to levy new taxes. Moreover, particularly in 1356–1358 and in 1412–1418, the refusal of the people and the revolt were accompanied by the profound aspiration of reform of the kingdom, encouraged by the leaders of the movement.][21]

The theme of reform reached its apogee during the reign of Charles VI and then vanished during the 1420s, when it was discredited, too closely linked with the Burgundians who had abused it by employing it opportunistically. As Philippe Contamine writes: "Etroitement associée aux tristes souvenirs que l'on conservait du temps de 'divisions,' le thème connut par la suite une éclipse prolongée, au moins auprès des milieux officiels." (Tightly associated with the sad memories of the time of the "divisions," the theme underwent a prolonged eclipse afterward, at least among official milieux.)[22]

Taxation, then, although necessary to the functioning of the kingdom as it existed, was deeply resented. It was all the more resented because it burdened those who could least afford it, while the wealthy paid no taxes at all under the principle that they were required in any case to aid the king by joining him in battle. But resentment was not targeted at the social structures responsible for the inequities of the system. The inequities were the result of the distribution of power, which was concentrated in the hands of the king and a small group of nobles, which is to say, those responsible for waging war and for the kingdom's bureaucratization. Instead, blame was turned on various scapegoats, in particular, the king's officers. Claude Gauvard describes the process:

> Les officiers royaux canalisent sur leur personnes les stéréotypes de la persécution: violence contre les faibles, fortune trop vite amassée, et même, dans les cas extrêmes, crimes sexuels. Ces accusations ont un effet de terreur dans l'opinion publique qui voit ses valeurs culturelles bafouées. Alors, rassemblée en foule, par-delà les éléments de différenciation sociale, la communauté perturbée réclame la mort de ceux qui la dérangent.
> [Royal officers attract stereotypes of persecution: violence against the weak, fortune too quickly won, and, even, in extreme cases, sexual crimes. These accusations arouse terror in public opinion, which sees its cultural values upset. Then assembling in a crowd that brought together different social elements, the angry community demands the death of those that disturb it.][23]

"Des prévôts sont accusés d'avoir traité de louches compositions au lieu de percevoir des amendes au profit du roi," writes Françoise Autrand. (The provosts are accused of shady dealing instead of collecting fines on behalf of the king.)[24] But the kingdom's financial woes could not be resolved by routing out dishonest officers. Frequently targets of reform, their pursuit did not bring about the desired results. As Autrand demonstrates, dishonest "fermiers"—or tax collectors—were vigorously pursued at certain times under Charles VI but to no effect.[25] The reason for the lack of progress was, as Autrand observes, the failure to question the real problem: while the outcry against tax "fermiers" was intense during the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, the system of tax farming itself was not questioned.[26] This "très puissant système de patronage" rendered real reform impossible.[27] Indeed, the deflection of blame away from its proper object toward what were mere cogs in the system hindered the likelihood of any real reform. Fourteenth- and fifteenth-century systems of taxation were unjust on every level: it was true, as reformers complained, that taxes were unfairly assessed and that their collection was executed by corrupt officers. But the realm's financial difficulties were not curable through the sort of reform envisioned by those calling for it.

The only solution lay in reforming the kingdom's distribution of power. This was not possible as long as the king and the nobility were locked into a symbiotic relationship. The king depended on the service of his nobles for his militaristic activity and for his government administration, services he was required to purchase with offices and pensions. Thus, Werner Paravicini remarks, even if the king was the source of all legality, he was helpless before the requests for favors from his courtiers. Indeed, the king was "pratiquement désarmé face à l'insistence qui vient de l'intérieur," as Paravicini describes it (practically disarmed in the face of the insistence that came from inside).[28] He was imagined as the supreme a gift-giver. The *Songe du vergier* (1378) makes explicit the centrality of this kingly function. Kings give gifts, and this is why they are lords (*seigneurs*).[29] The king is by definition a gift-giver.[30]

The system of gift-giving practiced by Charles VI and his entourage allowed a group of elites to maintain and reproduce itself. As Annette Weiner has written, reciprocity "is only the superficial aspect of exchange, which overlays much more politically powerful strategies of "keeping-while-giving."[31] One advertised one's elite status by giving glorious gifts, all the while retaining certain "inalienable" possessions for one's own family. And mem-

bership in the system meant influence. As Brigitte Buettner notes, "Gifts were used as political weapons to make and unmake alliances, to forge diplomatic ties, to signal dominance."[32] Jan Hirschbiegel makes dramatically clear how small the group of gift-givers was and how elaborate the gifts they exchanged were.[33] Within the system, one reproduced the status of one's ancestors and created the differences on which a divinely ordained dynasty depended. Small groups amassed goods, whether physical or cultural, to pass their status down to future generations.

Still, if gift-giving as a system of exchange had a venerable history, under Charles VI "un état bureaucratique (judiciaire et financier)" (a bureaucratic state [judiciary and financial]) was being put in place, a system capable of sustaining itself while the king was mad.[34] Gift-giving was an inefficient means of running a bureaucracy. But for efficiency to be recognized as a goal, that is, for any serious financial reform to take place, significant power would have had to be taken out of the hands of the small group of those close to the king and placed in the hands of members of other levels of society. However, a redistribution of power was never a serious component of any reform proposed during the early fifteenth century. Krynen explains that Nicole Oresme (1323–82), popularizer of Aristotle, associated the concept of reform with limits on the king's power. This would have been necessary for bringing about the rationalization of offices, understood as part of the system of gift-giving, and for taxing the nobility, who were exempt by virtue of the fact that it was expensive to serve the king.[35] But the idea of limiting the king's power received no further development during the early fifteenth century. Krynen notes that even Jean Gerson, who might have been expected to propose such an idea remained silent. Although Gerson supported conciliar rule at the Council of Constance, the theologian did not maintain a similar discourse regarding the French monarchy in Paris.[36] Krynen explains that even the Cabochian ordinance of 1413 made no suggestions for limiting the king's power but relied solely on the notion of purification, of reforming officers. It was thus incapable of effecting any serious reform:

> C'est l'épuration administrative qui est réclamée, non un réaménagement des rapports de pouvoir. Tout va mal par la faute des officiers, trop nombreux, trop puissants, et tous concessionnaires. La très prolixe ordonnance cabochienne brille par l'absence de dispositions politiques, comme si les réformateurs n'avaient plus d'autre vision de l'Etat qu'une monarchie légèrement et honnêtement administrée.

> [Administrative purification is demanded, not a reworking of power relations. All problems were attributed to the officers, who were supposedly too numerous, too powerful, and too venal. The highly prolix Cabochian ordinance was notable for the absence of a political agenda, as if the reformers had no further vision of the State than a sparely and honestly administered monarchy.][37]

As Gauvard writes, if Jean sans Peur gathered popular support by demanding financial reform in 1405, he quickly abandoned the discourse when pressed for fear of losing the very revenue he required to carry out his political agenda.[38] In fact, Jean undoubtedly profited from the discontent focused on officers to deflect attention from the real problem, which was, of course, the system itself, in which he was integrally implicated.

To sum up: taxes were necessary to the kingdom's continued function. Thus the abolition of taxes could not seriously be forwarded as a general proposition. Taxes were deeply resented, for good reasons. And yet, instead of questioning the system of kingship and gift-giving responsible for the abuses, protesters raised charges of mismanagement against officers, who, even if corrupt, were not the cause of the kingdom's financial distress.

It is also interesting to note that charges of mismanagement were not related to the actual level of expenditure. Fletcher observes of Richard II that "the complaints about Richard's reign came thickest during the 1380s, when expenditure was restrained, and then faded away even as costs increased."[39] In the French case, the most instructive counterargument to the notion that Isabeau was uniquely avaricious is that Charles V collected substantially more in tax money than did Charles VI, as we have just noted.[40] And yet modern audiences assume the court of Charles VI to have been more extravagant than that of his father.

To return to Isabeau, given the prevalence of the corruption theme during the hundred years leading up to her reign and during the years of her activity, it is surprising that she was not more often condemned by her contemporaries. The reason may be that she tended to be regarded as the king's representative, and the king himself was largely immune from criticism; this was deflected instead upon his evil counselors, the "bad weeds." As for modern attitudes toward the queen, Isabeau has long been and continues to be excoriated as cupidinous in secondary literature. It is necessary, however, to consider her within her own culture. Certainly a comparative study of economic systems would fault a system that concentrated fabulous wealth within

a small group. But the consumption of this individual queen can only reasonably be understood with reference to the norms of the economy within which she was required to act, and within this circle, her expenditures were simply normal for a queen and seem to have been considered as such in general. She cannot be expected to have done something that all the philosophers of her day were unable to do, that is, discern and deconstruct the formations of power that her culture presented to her as natural. Whatever the evils of this system, they were inextricable from the political life of the French Middle Ages. In this particular context, gorgeous objects conferred the power and prestige necessary to maintaining the mystique of kingship. The queen's material wealth allowed her to maintain the prestige she needed to defend the monarchy during her husband's absences against the challenges of the kingdom's most powerful dukes and to offer the gifts she needed to create alliances.

The *Chronicle of the Religieux of Saint Denis* as Record of Public Opinion?

The perception that Isabeau's reputation was blackened sometime during 1405 derives, as we have seen, from two primary sources. The first is the chronicle of Michel Pintoin, who reports anger against her and the Duke of Orleans for excessive spending and poor administration of the kingdom during that one year. A second chronicle, attributed to Juvénal des Ursins, also features one negative passage about Louis and the queen, but up until the year 1411, according to Peter Lewis, or 1413, according to René Planchenault, this chronicle is an abridged translation of that of Pintoin. The passage reproduces in abbreviated form Pintoin's story of Jacques Legrand's sermon, remarking that people were speaking out publicly against the queen and Louis of Orleans because of taxation.[41] A comparison of the passage in question in the two sources makes clear that the former is a short variation of the latter. Juvénal des Ursins, therefore, cannot be used for corroboration.[42] No other contemporary chronicle reports that the queen was disliked by the people. The Burgundian-leaning Enguerrand Monstrelet, born ca. 1390–95, has nothing negative to report about her.[43] Nor do other chroniclers of Burgundian inclination, including Jean Le Fèvre de Saint-Rémy, the anonymous author of the *Chronique des Cordeliers,* or Pierre Cochon, reproach the queen.[44] Even the rabidly pro-Burgundian Bourgeois of Paris offers nothing nastier than the observation that after the queen's retirement in the 1420s, the

people of Paris did not know or much care what had become of her. And certainly Froissart reports only positively on the queen.

Given the lack of corroborating evidence, then, it makes more sense to reexamine the monk's report of complaints against the queen and Louis closely than to accept it at face value. Pintoin's pro-Burgundian and anti-Orleanist bias in his early years is well-known.[45] A point of departure might be to forward and test the hypothesis that the monk was not reporting widespread negative discourse so much as the propaganda of a small group of Burgundian informers intent on damaging the queen in the year 1405. The Orleanist chronicle attributed to Cousinot lends credence to this interpretation for it mentions that the Duke of Burgundy spread lies about Louis and Isabeau among vagabonds and taverns.[46] But more important for the history of the queen's reputation, it is noteworthy that Cousinot does not report that the lies were taken seriously or that they damaged the queen's reputation. He simply states rather that the lies further strained relations between the two dukes. It is one thing to spread rumors among vagabonds and taverngoers and another for them to take root.

The chronicle of Pintoin, who was born ca. 1356 and served as cantor at the cathedral of Saint Denis from shortly after 1400 until his death in 1420, is indispensible for understanding the reign of Charles VI and for following Isabeau's career.[47] The chronicler is given a good deal of credit for accuracy, and, because of his meticulousness in other areas, the nineteenth-century historians who devoted studies to Isabeau accepted the monk's assertions about the queen's unpopularity uncritically, assuming that he had personally witnessed the public's disenchantment with her. Moreover, Pintoin's trustworthiness as a source on medieval public opinion was promoted in Bernard Guenée's 2002 monograph, *L'Opinion publique à la fin du Moyen Age d'après la "Chronique de Charles VI" du Religieux de Saint-Denis*. Guenée's thesis is that Pintoin's chronicle represents a systematic analysis of the public opinion of the time: that "conscient du poids de l'opinion publique dans la vie politique du royaume au temps de Charles VI, Michel Pintoin s'est attaché à en donner des analyses systématiques" (conscious of the weight of public opinion in political life during the time of Charles VI, Michel Pintoin made it a point to include systematic analyses of it).[48]

A number of actions seem to indicate that the leaders of the kingdom heeded their publics—at least, they were careful to inform the public about their deeds. Louis of Orleans—and later the Armagnacs—and the Burgundians sent letters justifying what they were doing out to various towns of the

kingdom to be read in public.[49] Peace accords were ritualistically presented before the public, heralded by trumpets, and announced by town criers. Entries were staged to theatricalize relationships between the royalty and the people.

Bernard Guenée observes that Pintoin shows a greater attention to crowd reaction than earlier chroniclers, attributing this fact to the monk's sense of the importance of public opinion to the royalty, claiming that the *puissant* feared public opinion above all things.[50] But did the monk truly believe that public opinion was important to the royalty? True, Pintoin describes public reaction. But his tendency to describe public reaction can be explained as part of a larger trend in chronicle writing. It does not necessarily indicate that he believed the royalty to fear public opinion or that he observed the public in action. As Zrinka Stahuljak has explained, toward the end of the fourteenth century, chronicle narrators begin to refer to themselves in the first person. The effect of this is to conflate two textual personae previously kept separate: the narrator of the chronicle and its author.[51] The narrator and the author were of course the same person, but earlier chronicle narrators had typically referred to themselves in their authorial persona in the third person, and, on the rare occasion when they intruded as narrator into the text, to that persona in the first-person plural. When chroniclers begin to enter into their own texts, referring to themselves in the first person, they seem to a modern audience to be eyewitnesses to the events they recount. They heighten the effect by describing the situation around them, the reactions of the crowds, for example. And yet, this is often no more than a rhetorical effect. Whereas earlier chroniclers had authorized their texts by adhering to historical patterns—salvation history, for example—these chroniclers draw their authority from their proximity to events.

Pintoin relied upon the testimony of others for most parts of his chronicle. Guenée notes: "Michel Pintoin a multiplié dans sa chronique la transcription ou la traduction de documents de toutes natures parvenus jusqu'à Saint-Denis." (Michel Pintoin fills his chronicle with transcriptions and translations of all varieties.)[52] And yet, even when he was not present at an event he records, he often claims that he was, letting the reader believe that he was an "eyewitness." In a number of cases, this has little bearing on the accuracy of his narration. Already in 1902 Noël Valois demonstrated that the monk gives the impression of having been part of a group of ambassadors sent to Avignon in 1395 and part of another sent to Rome in 1407, when in fact he was not.[53] The information he records appears to be accurate, so in this case, whether Pintoin personally accompanied the ambassadors is of little importance.

But it is important to note this habit, because it means that we cannot take for granted that Pintoin was present at the events he describes, and therefore we cannot assume that he actually observed the reactions he describes. We do not know whether he ever had firsthand experience of the "murmurings" he reports hearing against Louis and the queen. If he did not personally witness popular discontent, from whom did he get his information about dissatisfaction with the administration of Louis and the queen and why did he describe it in his chronicle? Guenée writes that much of the public opinion recorded by Pintoin seems to issue from a small group of *sages,* wise political thinkers, to whom the monk refers on numerous occasions as *circumspecti.* The *circumspecti,* horrified by the disaster they perceive to be imminent, transmit warnings about the state of the realm. According to Guenée, Pintoin conceives of himself as the spokesperson for this elite group of thinkers.[54]

To return to the question of whether the monk believed in the importance of public opinion, I suggest that Pintoin does not so much scrupulously record what he observes of the crowds around him as report the comments of this group to reinforce his own interpretation of the events of 1405. If Pintoin's *circumspecti* could in fact be identified as intelligent and impartial observers dedicated to averting the impending doom, it would be safe to assume that Isabeau did something in 1405 that caused them to murmur their disapproval. But the Council in 1405 was dominated by Louis of Orleans and challenged by Jean sans Peur. The members of the Council were divided on the basis of their loyalties. Given this situation, it is certain that Pintoin would have been the spokesperson for a group with a clearly defined political bias. In the case of Isabeau, his reports of discontent would not issue from objective men who sought to report wrongdoing in hopes of forcing remedies for the good of the kingdom but from men who wished to promote their version of events to further their own political goals. Guenée has shown in different contexts that Pintoin's history creates a moral narrative to which he makes the events he describes conform, which means that he sometimes invents characters to act as mouthpieces for certain points of view.[55] The shadowy *regnicole, plebs, decuriones insignes,* and *circumspecti* who murmured against Isabeau, I would suggest, are the inventions of interested parties reporting to Pintoin with the goal of justifying the attempts of their leaders—first Philip of Burgundy and then Jean sans Peur—to control the government.

It will now be necessary to support my argument about the identity of the monk's *circumspecti* in some detail.

Pintoin's Louis of Orleans

However, first we must make a quick detour. Any analysis of the representation of the queen and her detractors in Pintoin's chronicle has to begin by emphasizing that she is only described as the target of criticism when she is associated with Louis of Orleans, and that Pintoin is very clearly biased against Louis in favor of the Burgundians. In the polarized atmosphere of France of 1405, the Duke of Orleans was a powerful patron who also had powerful enemies. Like Philip III's despised Pierre de la Broce or Philip the Fair's Enguerran de Marigny, Louis, the king's favorite advisor, received the brunt of the rival faction's jealousy. Furthermore, during the period for which Pintoin reports dissatisfaction with Louis, the Duke of Orleans had involved the kingdom in military activity against England, and this was not going well for the French. The Burgundians, opposed to any military activity that threatened their relations with the English because of the Flemish cities' commerce with England, complained loudly against taxes levied to fund that war. I will address this point in detail in the next section, because it involves Isabeau.

Why has the Burgundian perspective so thoroughly dominated historiography of the period? As Elizabeth Gonzalez notes, "Autant les études portant sur la Bourgogne, ses ducs et le personnel à leur service abondent, autant celles consacrées aux princes d'Orléans de la fin du Moyen Age sont quasi inexistantes, souvent incomplètes, voire très contestables." (Whereas the studies relative to Burgundy, its dukes and their personnel are abundant, those consecrated to the princes of Orleans at the end of the Middle Ages are almost inexistent, often incomplete, indeed, of dubious accuracy.)[56] To a large extent, the phenomenon is a function of the relative power of the two houses. Gonzalez points to "le fait que la principauté orléanaise est loin d'avoir connu le sort de ce que d'aucuns qualifient de 'royaume' ou 'd'Etat' bourguignon" (the fact that the principality of Orleans was nothing like what is often called the Burgundian 'kingdom' or 'state'").[57] She offers further explanation for the success of the Burgundian propaganda machine in blackening the name of Louis of Orleans, writing:

> Longtemps, l'histoire s'est faite à partir des sources bourguignonnes, naturellement hostiles aux Orléans, et il a fallu attendre le XIXe siècle et Michelet pour que le premier prince de cette dynastie, Louis Ier d'Orléans, fût réhabilité.
> [The historiographical tradition must also be taken into account. For a

long time, histories were written from Burgundian sources, which were naturally hostile toward the House of Orleans, and it was not until the nineteenth century and Michelet that the first prince of the dynasty, Louis of Orleans, was rehabilitated.][58]

The result has been that any history treating Louis tends to be "dépourvue de tout regard critique envers les sources" (devoid of any critical perspective on the sources).[59] Although histories written under Charles VII cast the House of Orleans in a positive light, these are not the sources that modern histories have mined for information on the reign of Charles VI. They have relied on sources contemporary with the period.

To make the case that Pintoin's information about Louis issued from Burgundian sources, I would begin with the observation that the monk's sources for details on the Duke of Orleans are sometimes incorrect in ways that show Louis in an unflattering light while flattering the Duke of Burgundy. Pintoin's information about the growing conflict between the Duke of Orleans and his Burgundian relatives during the first years of the fifteenth century is based necessarily on "des bruits de la cour" (rumors of the court), as Guenée notes, because deliberations in the Royal Council were private.[60] And regarding these deliberations, it is clear that Pintoin is often misinformed. For example, in July 1402, he claims that one day when the Duke of Orleans was otherwise occupied, the king summoned his Council and asked them whom they would like to see in charge during his "absences." Their reply: "The Duke of Burgundy."[61] After soliciting the opinion of his Council, the king supposedly transferred power from his brother to his uncle by letters patent. The relevant documents tell a very different story. Louis had been named *président des généraux-counseilleurs sur le fait des finances provenant des aides établies dans le Languedoil pour la guerre* (that is, given authority to levy taxes for the continuing war against England) on April 18.[62] On June 26, Philip had been given exactly the same appointment, which meant that the men were meant to share authority. On the first day of July, Isabeau had been designated president of the Council by royal ordinance.[63] It is simply not true that Philip was promoted at Louis's expense. Because the story is both false and unflattering to Louis, it can only have come from Burgundian informants who offered Pintoin their own version of the rivalry to justify their position for posterity.

Other incidents reported in the chronicle make clear that Pintoin's knowledge of what transpired at court was based on reports from Burgundian

sources. Indeed, one of his major sources on Louis seems to have been the 1408 justification by University of Paris theologian Jean Petit of Jean of Burgundy's having committed murder, as Michael Nordberg has demonstrated.[64] After having the Duke of Orleans assassinated in November of 1407, Jean attempted to exonerate himself in March of the following year through this public justification presented by Jean Petit. The justification claimed that because he had been a tyrant, Louis deserved to die and that it had thus been Jean's obligation to see to his assassination. Louis's two main sins, according to the justification, were that he had tried to murder the king for years with magical spells and that he was greedy: he had tried to take over Normandy and he helped himself to the taxes raised for the war.

Pintoin's 1392 entry describing the reasons for which Louis banished courtier Pierre de Craon from his court draws upon the justification. Like the justification, Pintoin's chronicle asserts that Louis chased Craon from court for spreading the story that the duke cast spells with bones.[65] Only Pintoin's chronicle and the justification make this claim. Although the material appears in Pintoin's chronicle in a year anterior to the justification, he must have borrowed the information from the later source rather than the other way around, as Nordberg explains, for Jean Petit's version is the more detailed and because the chronicle would not yet have been available to the public in 1408—and therefore not to Jean Petit, either.

Pintoin finishes the story of Craon's being banished from Louis's court by remarking that the nobles grumbled (*inter se murmuraverunt*) about the action, but that they were afraid to counter the duke. Guenée, asserting that the grumbling does not appear in Petit, cites this as evidence of the monk's attention to public opinion: "Mais les précisions qu'il ajoute à la fin prouvent bien que lui-même était parfaitement informé de cet incident qui l'avait vivement frappé, et montrent surtout l'attention qu'il portait toujours à l'opinion publique." (But the refinements that he adds at the end prove that he himself was perfectly well-informed about the incident, which had struck him acutely, and show the attention that he always lent public opinion.)[66] It is not known which of the manuscripts of the justification Pintoin used for his chronicle. However, it is not accurate that the grumbling appears only in Pintoin. For as Nordberg points out, the same observation about grumbling against Louis for banishing Craon from his court appears in the chronicle of the violently anti-Orleanist chronicle of Pierre Cochon, a chronicle completely independent of Pintoin's, and which reproduces its own copy of Petit's

justification. The only explanation for the appearance of the comment about grumbling in both chronicles can be that Pintoin and Cochon drew on a common source for the line. This common source must have been a version of the justification that included the grumbling.[67] The grumbling nobles of Pintoin's chronicle, thus, are Burgundians.

Nordberg cites Pintoin's story that in 1405 Louis took it into his head to assume authority over Normandy as further evidence for the monk's reliance on Petit.[68] The charge that Louis tried to take over Normandy is corroborated in two other sources: the second justification of Petit, written after the Orleanists had responded to his first justification, and, once again, Cochon, who, as Nordberg shows, derives his information on this subject from the second justification.[69] Given that the attempted takeover is recorded only in two anti-Orleanist sources and nowhere else, it is likely to be a Burgundian invention. Far from attempting to impose himself on Normandy, Louis was probably visiting the duchy in his capacity as *lieutenant et capitaine général pour le fait de la guerre en Picardie et Normandie,* a position awarded him in 1404.[70] But among the Burgundians, his visit was turned into a bid to attach Normandy to his own domain.

Finally, Nordberg explains that Pintoin reports that Louis was accused of diverting funds from *tailles* that had been collected to support the war against England.[71] Once again, the information seems to have come from Petit's justification. One detail adduced by Pintoin, that Louis had taken 200,000 écus from the royal treasure, is found only in the justification.[72] As to the validity of the charge, an examination of financial records does not support it. Maurice Rey scrutinizes the accusation in his volume on royal finances under Charles VI, concluding that it is baseless: "Rien, dans les grandes *Tailles* des années 1404 et 1405, ne fut l'objet de don au seigneur chez qui on la percevait; le frère du roi, alors au sommet de sa toute-puissance, n'osa pas en profiter pour se servir directement, comme en témoigne sa comptabilité." (Nothing in the great *Tailles* of the years 1404 and 1405 was made a gift to the lord who collected it; the brother of the king, at the height of his power, did not dare profit from it directly, as his accounts verify.)[73] Rey dismisses the charge as accusations "astucieusement lancées dans les cercles bourguignons pour dresser l'opinion publique contre l'homme qu'on voulait abattre" (astutely launched in Burgundian circles to push public opinion against the man they wanted to kill).[74]

Pintoin's Isabeau

The Louis of Orleans described in Pintoin's chronicle is derived at least in part from the most biased source imaginable: the self-justification of his assassin. It is clear, then, why Pintoin's Louis appears in a negative light. The four negative references to the queen in Pintoin's chronicle all tie her to Louis. Thus it seems reasonable to conclude that the criticisms reported about Isabeau, like those reported about Louis, reflect the attacks of a small group of Burgundian detractors.

Two other points are important: first, all the attacks all take place in 1405, and, second, the alleged complaints implicitly attribute an enormous amount of power to the queen. Accusations of mismanagement of the realm would only be aimed at a queen with serious clout. And yet until this moment in the chronicle, Isabeau's role had been strictly ceremonial. According to Pintoin, as we have seen, Charles VI had put Philip of Burgundy in charge of the realm in July 1402, while the Dukes of Berry, Burgundy, and Orleans ruled jointly in 1404, and with Philip's death, Louis had taken the reins. Until 1405, Pintoin had limited Isabeau's role to bearing children and attempting to persuade Charles to revoke burdensome taxes.[75] How does she suddenly become a powerful and unpopular queen in 1405? And why does she disappear from a central role at the end of 1405 just as suddenly as she had appeared?

Isabeau, I suggest, pops into the monk's chronicle as an unpopular and inexplicably powerful figure when she does because in 1405, for the first time, she was understood as a serious obstacle by the Burgundians. Philip of Burgundy, uncle to Charles VI, brother to the former king, Charles V, and therefore entitled to power and prestige, died in April 1404.[76] What this meant in practical terms was that Burgundian access to royal funds dried up. Philip's son, Jean sans Peur, quickly made a bid to take up his father's position in the government. However, Jean, a mere cousin to the king, was rebuffed not only by Louis, whose own power had increased with the death of Philip, but by Isabeau, who saw Jean, with good reason from the perspective of the royal family, as a dangerous usurper. Throughout the remainder of 1404 and 1405, Jean tried by various means to assert himself, without success. Isabeau's "troublesomeness" came to a head in August 1405, when she attempted to preserve the dauphin from the clutches of Jean, in an episode that has come to be known as the *enlèvement du dauphin.* When Jean marched on Paris in August of 1405, Isabeau fled to Melun, leaving orders for the royal children

to follow, fearing that Jean would assert power over the mad king and that having the dauphin in his care would validate his claim to power. Pintoin's story of the *enlèvement du dauphin,* like that of the other major chroniclers of the period, Monstrelet and Juvénal des Ursins, derives from the self-serving report of Jean, himself, and, in this account, the queen is cast as a recalcitrant, refusing to reform the realm according to the proposal laid out by the Burgundians.[77] The Isabeau whom Pintoin meets in Jean's account of the *enlèvement* was easily adaptable to the overall narrative of corruption and waste that shapes much of the early years of his chronicle. One of the favorite strategies of Jean sans Peur to garner popularity in Paris was to pose as a proponent of financial reform. It was inevitable in the version of events that his men reported that Louis and his ally, Isabeau, would be cast as villains.

But hard as the monk tries to tell a story of "public" dissension against a cupidinous queen, the fact that her detractors were the Burgundians can be read through the chronicle, and the real stakes of the events he reports sometimes erupt through the text's surface. Had a strong anti-Isabeau current existed, surely it would have surfaced during the Cabochian revolt of 1413 when the Parisians were more vocal about royal spendthrift than at any other time during Isabeau's reign, and, had he been committed to recording public opinion, surely Pintoin would have mentioned this. And yet, Isabeau appears as an honored figure in Pintoin's version of the Cabochian revolt.[78]

The spot where one would most expect to see complaints against Isabeau, the entries describing the Cabochian revolt, then, turn up nothing. Let us now examine the spots in Pintoin's chronicle where reports of the queen's unpopularity do turn up. First, as I noted above, it is important to consider 1405 as reported in Pintoin's chronicle in the context of the continuing war against the English, which was not going well in that year. After a period of peace sealed by the marriage between Isabelle, daughter of Charles VI and Isabeau, and the English king, Richard II, war had gradually broken out again after Richard was deposed by Henry IV in 1400. In April 1404, the Counts of Foix and Armagnac had threatened the English in Guyenne and Bordeaux. In June of that year, Louis, eager to continue the fight, got himself appointed *lieutenant et capitaine général* for war in Picardy and Normandy. As we have seen, soon afterward, the Royal Council ordered the Count de la Marche to negotiate an alliance with Owen Glendower, inciting him to revolt against Henry IV. Beginning in 1405, *connétable* Charles d'Albret and the Count of Armagnac led French offensives in Guyenne and Saint-

onge. At the same time, the Count de la Marche led a disastrous naval expedition to Wales to aid Owen Glendower in his revolt. Heading an expedition in Calais, the Count of Saint Pol was defeated at Marck, on May 20, 1405. The Boulonnais and Flanders were threatened. As Coville describes the situation, the kingdom was the target of "perpétuels ravages, des expéditions de pillage et de désolation, guerre permanente et ruineuse, plus funeste qu'une défaite pour le pays qui la subit" (perpetual ravaging, pillaging and destruction, permanent and ruinous warfare, worse than defeat for the country subjected to it).[79]

The immediate context of the monk's criticism of Isabeau, then, was a war that was going very badly for the French. The first of four examples of criticism of the queen emerges as part of Pintoin's announcement that the French expeditions of the year had not stopped the English, who kept on attacking on all sides of the kingdom and ravishing without obstacle, nearly always winning. The monk reports that the inhabitants of the realm resented the absence of peace and cursed the taxes imposed on them for the war.

> Expediciones bellice, quas ad qualemcunque regni gloriam anno isto memini me scripsisse, Anglicorum arcere non potuerunt superbiam, quin longe lateque per regnum littora maritima viribus inquietantes libere grassarentur, et cum vires exercebant, sepius meliorem calculum reportabant. Cum cordis amaritudine inde cum clero nobiles et ignobiles dolentes, jugum intollerabile plebis, sub titulo subsidii guerrarum levatum, execrabile reputabant, cum sic manere non posset in pulcritudine pacis et requie temporalium opulenta. In regine et ducis Aurelianis culpam malum hoc regnicole retorquebant, qui sic regnum tepide gubernabant. [The military expeditions that I have written about this year, whatever they brought to the glory of the kingdom, they were not able to curb the pride of the English, who prowled freely through the kingdom along the maritime coasts, making trouble for people, and, when they engaged, they often came out on top. Along with the clergy, the suffering nobility and lower classes reflected angrily, their hearts filled with bitterness, on the intolerable yoke imposed on the people under the title of war subsidies, because it did not permit them to remain in the beauty of peace and luxurious repose of the world. The inhabitants put the blame on the queen and the Duke of Orleans, who were governing inefficiently.][80]

Immediately after the passage above, Pintoin reports that Jean sans Peur voted against the new taxes to support the war in the Council. Proceedings

at the Council being private, the monk had to get the news from someone. Surely the complaint was passed on to the monk by the men of the Duke of Burgundy, who, like his father, protested taxes levied for the war to reinforce his own image of reformer.[81] The Duke of Burgundy occupied only the fifth place in the deliberations at that point, Pintoin informs his readers; claiming that the taxes were not necessary was a way of increasing his own reputation.[82] The propagandistic intent of his complaints about war taxes is evidenced by his manifestly false assertion in 1406 that he had not received the portion of the *taille* to which he was entitled to prepare for a siege of Calais. Records clearly indicate that he did receive his portion.[83]

The second criticism is Pintoin's story of the Augustinian monk, Jacques Legrand, who scolded Isabeau and her courtiers in the spring of 1405. But once again, the complaint is in fact the war. The public (*plebs*) voiced its unhappiness about the spending habits of Louis and Isabeau, the monk reiterates, but no one dared criticize the royalty publicly until Legrand denounced the queen. After a stirring sermon on the virtues and vices, he told her: "In tua curia domina Venus solium occupans, ipsi eciam obsequntur ebrietas et commessacio, que noctes vertunt in diem, continuantes choreas dissolutas. Hee maledicte et infernales pedissece, curiam assidue ambientes, mores viresque enervant plurium." (Lady Venus occupies the throne in your court: certainly drunkenness and debauchery follow her, turning night into day, with continual dissolute dancing. Oh, the cursed and infernal lackeys, who constantly inhabit your court, greatly sap morals and strength.)[84]

According to Pintoin, the sermon delivered a stinging moral indictment of Isabeau and Louis of Orleans. The sermon has not survived except for the small bits reported in Pintoin's chronicle, so we cannot verify his interpretation of it. Several traces of the sermon as they can be read in the chronicle, however, suggest that far from a shocking reproach to the queen and proof of a sudden downturn in her popularity, the sermon was simply a perfectly ordinary one of the type routinely preached at court and that its core complaint was in fact the unsuccessful war against the English.

First, it should be noted that the passage reported by Pintoin must be inserted into the context of sermons, where it is not nearly as audacious as it may seem. Sermons preached before the king and queen routinely criticized the morals of the court, as another sermon, preached before Isabeau in 1396, that is, nearly ten years before her supposed fall from popularity, attests.[85] This sermon scolds the nobles for not being sufficiently humble and too fixed on worldly things. The preaching of the sermon of 1396, however, finds no

horrified moralizing commentary in Pintoin's chronicle. Why would it have? Preachers were expected to rail against vice: that was their job. And complaints about the frivolity of the court had been common enough since at least the twelfth century to form a literary subgenre.[86]

Moreover, the fact that Louis was Legrand's patron diminishes the likelihood that the sermon was perceived as shocking by its audience. Legrand's most important work, the incomplete *Archiloge sophie,* which was intended to set out in twelve books everything that was known of science, was effusively dedicated to Louis of Orleans.[87] After the assassination of the Duke of Orleans, Legrand became a rabid Orleanist. It thus seems implausible that he would have waged a personal attack against the Duke of Orleans and his ally, the queen.

The real object of the sermon is strongly suggested by its textual context. Just before the Legrand episode, Pintoin refers to the May 15 expedition of the Count of St. Pol against a garrison at Marck, from which the English had been launching raids on the nearby region of the Boulonnais. The expedition met with disaster when it was attacked by English from Calais. While the count fled, many of his men were killed or taken prisoner.

Pintoin's continuation of the Legrand story is further evidence of the sermon's real point. When the king, who was not present for the original sermon, heard about it, he questioned the preacher face to face, asking him to repeat the fiery words. Legrand complied, says Pintoin. However, the substance of the discourse that Legrand held before the king, as Pintoin reports it, is not the greed of the queen and the Duke of Orleans but rather the badly managed war with the English.[88] Legrand reminded the king of his father, Charles V. While that wise king had also imposed *tailles,* it had been to serve the glory of France: to build fortresses, defeat the enemies of the realm, reclaim lost cities, amass the treasures that had made him rich. In contrast, under Charles VI, there were no glorious expeditions for the kingdom, the soldiers were not even paid; the *tailles* were appropriated by a few. Everyone lived in vice.

Legrand's reference to Venus reigning at the court, so long used as evidence of Isabeau's lax moral standards, takes on a new aspect when reconsidered as a criticism of a badly managed war. This was a common insult waged against ineffective soldiers, who were called soldiers of Venus rather than Mars. A comparison with the chronicle of Thomas of Walsingham, which criticizes Richard II's inner circle for what he condemns as their unwillingness to engage in battle and also their refusal to heed outside advice,

demonstrates the popularity of the image. Thomas writes that "several of them were more soldiers of Venus than of Bellona [Goddess of War], more valorous in the bedchamber than on the field of battle, and more likely to defend themselves with their tongues than their spears, for although they slept on when the trumpet sounded for deeds of war, they were always wide awake to make speeches."[89] The Venus passage, I would suggest, can also be usefully compared with the *Quadrilogue invectif* of Alain Chartier (1422). In this poetic debate among the Three Estates, the people complain that they have been devastated by the nobility's warring, but that they would not mind if only the nobility would win.[90] The anger that the sermon aroused among courtiers, as recorded by Pintoin, then, would have been targeted at the preacher's denigration of French knighthood.

A final key to the passage is Pintoin's use of the expression *in tua curia* to locate the scandal.[91] The *curia,* "court," implies a governing body, counselors, the Royal Council, and all of the royal household. As Malcom Vale has noted, "The court was where the ruler was."[92] In the context of the war with England, Isabeau's court would have been that of Charles VI. The charge is not being waged against Isabeau's personal household but against the court in general, against the advisors of the king, against the Royal Council, who were levying taxes for a war that was not being successfully accomplished: against those who were knights of Venus rather than knights of Mars. Although the monk never acknowledges that Isabeau holds a position of some influence at court, Legrand's reference to the *curia* as her own (*in tua curia*) reveals her importance there.

It seems that the story lying under Pintoin's tale of Legrand's moral indictment goes something like this: predisposed by his Burgundian sources to see Louis of Orleans as an immoral wastrel, the monk pushed the report he received of Legrand's sermon through this interpretive grid, producing a story of the sermon as an attack on courtly morals. Isabeau's role is both obscured and highlighted in the account: clearly she occupies a position of power if Legrand includes her in his critique of war spending. But, Pintoin, unaccustomed to seeing women as political figures, does not explain the queen's importance.

The third incidence of criticism of the queen reported by Pintoin occurs shortly after the Legrand sermon where it serves as an introduction to the episode that has come to be known as the *enlèvement du dauphin*. Noble seigneurs asked that the kingdom be watched over, the monk asserts, because the queen and Louis were using their power to crush the kingdom and enrich

themselves.[93] Some people of the court, he continues after relating the story about Louis's attempt to appropriate Normandy, even accused the pair of neglecting her children. The king demanded verification of this from the dauphin, who reported that his mother had not caressed him for three months. The king then gave the *domicella* who took care of the dauphin the very cup from which he was just about to drink in gratitude for her services.

It would be easy to simply dismiss the story, which finds no other corroboration, as a malevolent fiction, given the ample proof of Isabeau's maternal devotion, which I will enumerate in chapter eight. But when this story of motherly neglect is juxtaposed with another one related by Pintoin during the *enlèvement du dauphin* incident, I believe that it reveals something of the mode of its own creation. Describing the scenario after Jean's snatching of the dauphin, Pintoin reports that with discord prevailing between the Dukes of Orleans and Burgundy, nothing could be done by one without the other being informed of it immediately by the gossip of courtiers. Rumors flew back and forth, further inflaming the already dangerous situation. Pintoin then notes that Isabeau dismissed some of her own ladies from the court for spreading scandalous rumors, including Madame Minchière, close counselor and keeper of the queen's seal.[94]

Madame Minchière did not exist; modern historians generally agree that the reference is to Madame de Semihier, a Bavarian by birth, *dame d'honneur* and sometime chancellor of the queen from 1396 to 1405.[95] Madame de Semihier did indeed leave the queen's service in 1405 for reasons unknown. But her husband and daughter continued to serve the queen after she left.[96] She moved into the household of Isabeau's brother, Louis the Duke of Bavaria, in 1407, and eventually left France with her husband for Bavaria in 1411.

In that same year, 1405, another *dame d'honneur,* Madame Malicorne, who was at different times responsible for the royal children, also left the service of the queen for unknown reasons. The name "Minchière" looks as if it might be a conflation of Semihier and Malicorne. Perhaps the monk's Madame Minchière is in fact Madame Malicorne, the young woman charged with care of the dauphin. With both women leaving the queen's service in 1405, Pintoin's story begins to look like a garbling of different events. One of these events would be the coming to light of a rumor, which he describes as flying back and forth between the two camps. Perhaps the rumor, of Burgundian origin, accused the queen of maternal neglect—nothing could be more plausible, given Jean sans Peur's accusation of maternal neglect in his

version of the "kidnapping of the dauphin," which I will discuss in chapter six. Perhaps Madame Malicorne, the children's governess, targeted by gossiping courtiers for having accused the queen of failing to take care of her children, was sent away by the queen. The other event, the departure of Madame Semihier, may have been entirely noncontroversial.

The story of Madame Malicorne, however, may have given rise to the story of the king asking his son about Isabeau's caresses. In any case, it could have been fed to Pintoin only by a Burgundian. Pintoin would not have gotten such unflattering material from an Orleanist. Given this, there is good reason to approach the charge skeptically.

The fourth criticism comes at the time of the *enlèvement du dauphin* episode.

Isabeau's detractors were not objective observers and given the lack of other evidence, we have no reason to assume that their views reflect a widespread opinion. The modern perception of the queen's sudden loss of popularity is the product of Pintoin's Burgundian sources, who in 1405 had experienced her resistance to their projects. One would expect them to spread rumors about their enemies and assert that they were being accused of avariciousness. Until other evidence that Isabeau was disliked in 1405 appears, it seems reasonable to imagine that Pintoin records not "public opinion," or even the opinion of a group of wise men, but a trace of the Burgundian propaganda machine.[97]

In *L'Opinion publique à la fin du Moyen Age,* Guenée cautions against accepting Pintoin's version of an event that receives no corroborating evidence in official sources. And yet, he cites the supposed attempt of Louis of Orleans to lay hold of Normandy as particularly instructive for understanding public opinion. This is despite the fact that Guenée himself notes that the story appears in no official source and remarks that the attempt came to naught (which is not surprising if it never occurred at all).[98] It is prudent, I believe, to follow Guenée's initial approach and read events recorded only by the monk with skepticism. If we follow this approach consistently, we will not be able to accept the unpopularity of the queen uncritically.[99] Furthermore, Guenée observes that Pintoin is led by his moral vision to invent events. Analyzing the monk's recounting of the Peace of Tournai, Guenée meticulously separates the facts from their representation in the chronicle. As Guenée demonstrates, the story of the reconciliation between Philip of Burgundy, new count of Flanders, and the rebellious Ghenters, is ideologically shaped by the addition of a fictive goldsmith from Ghent who speaks unre-

alistically in support of the king and the French. As Guenée observes, "Ce qu'il veut d'abord, c'est bien exposer une théorie" (What he wants to do, first and foremost, is expound a theory).[100] It is impossible to know exactly how much confidence to attribute the chronicle in general, he explains: "C'est selon. Chaque morceau devra être examiné en lui-même." (It depends. Each section must be examined individually.)[101]

Strongly influenced by nineteenth-century histories of Isabeau, modern historians have accepted accounts of her unpopularity without the necessary skepticism. The chronicle of Pintoin, carefully examined, does not offer evidence of general dislike of the queen, but of a small number of planted attacks on her.

The "Songe véritable"

The second frequently adduced source for Isabeau's bad reputation among the people of her time is an anonymous poem known as the "Songe véritable" ("The True Dream"). The work exists in only two manuscripts, so it cannot be assumed to have circulated widely. Moreover, its bias is obvious: coming up for criticism before Isabeau are Louis of Orleans, Jean of Berry, and the king's *grand maître d'hôtel,* Jean de Montaigu, whom Jean sans Peur had put to death in 1409. In short, the cast of characters are the opponents of Jean sans Peur.

In this section, I argue first that the "Songe véritable" must be read as the product of a clash between two mutually opposed economic visions, that of the nobility and that of the inhabitants of the towns, with Jean sans Peur as representative of the towns. As Kathleen Daly has written, "For some (particularly themselves), royal officers were faithful servants of the crown, rewarded for their devotion: while for their critics, they were incompetent, rapacious and self-serving! These contrasting images seem appropriate for a group whose functions and social situation were undergoing profound changes during the fifteenth century."[102] Second, I argue that the poem does not reflect the queen's unpopularity but in fact bears witness to the writer's anxiety that she was greatly loved. A passage devoted to describing the fall from popularity that Fortune has decided to impose upon the queen suggests that while Fortune may have planned the fall, it has not yet taken place.

In 1405, the reasons for the kingdom's financial problems were not clearly understood by the nobility or the townspeople. From the perspective of the nobility, as loyal servants of the king who were expected not only to leave be-

hind their own territories to help him with governing the realm, but to provide men at arms to defend the kingdom when called upon, Louis of Orleans, Jean of Berry, and many of the courtiers depicted with such disgust in the "Songe véritable" were rewarded in a manner befitting their service. The "Songe véritable" depicts these servants of the king in a very different light. The people, represented by Chascun, which means something like Everyman, were willing to pay taxes to the king. However, according to the poem, their taxes never reach the king but are appropriated by rapacious courtiers who take the money for themselves, requiring ever more taxes to be extorted from the people.

Still, by dramatizing the working of Commune Renommé, "common knowledge," the "Songe véritable" readily admits that it does not know exactly why the king suffers under such sordid circumstances. While the poem's analysis mirrors the popular understanding that the kingdom's financial difficulties were being caused by bad officers and greedy courtiers, depicting the king as innocent victim of his courtiers, it simultaneously makes the point that no one really understands how money circulates in the French economy. Thelma Fenster, who has demonstrated the importance of *fama,* rumor, has shown that in medieval culture "knowledge" was built through the accumulation of eyewitness and hearsay reports and that such knowledge was considered valid. "It is startling for the non-specialist, therefore," she writes, "to realize that medieval legal systems readily acknowledged the force of common opinion and even devised ground rules for it use."[103] Certainly the eagerness with which Chascun, Everyman, accepts the appearance of Commune Renommé when he cannot find the truth speaks to the aptness of Fenster's observation. For Fenster, Commune Renommé represents the "political voice of the people."

Fenster also argues that the poem "undoubtedly played a role in creating the negative *fama* of those surrounding the king, including Isabeau, whose poor reputation persists to the present."[104] I believe that this conclusion bears reexamination. Certainly the composer of this work did not wander among the *gens de métier* of Paris to elicit opinions and write them down but sought rather to form the opinions of those with access to an aural literary culture. Commune Renommé in this work represents that which is represented to the literate, rather than what is believed spontaneously and circulated by the people. Indeed, Commune Renommé, who is called on to draw conclusions when Verité proves impossible to find, beautifully illustrates the staging of authority. The character represents the authority of the one who

desires to "rescue" the king from his avaricious courtiers, in other words, the authority of the opponent of those represented in the line-up of the greedy and ambitious. Like the propaganda letters that accompanied controversial events, the public announcements at Châtelet announcing princely opposition to or approval of recently passed measures of the Royal Council, or the public reading of royal ordinances, the "Songe véritable" is a representation of power. What we witness in it is not an outpouring of public opinion, the circulation of *mala fama*. Rather, it is the attempt to impose an opinion on a potential audience.

A brief summary of the poem's plot will be necessary to make these points clearly. The story begins by presenting itself as a version of the *Roman de la Rose,* a dream that transmits a truth. It is a revelation rather than a reasoned argument:

> Les gens qui dient que en songes
> N'a se fables non et mençonges,
> Sy comme ou rommant de la Rose
> Est dit, en texte, non en glose,
> Sy n'ont pas tout bien essayé,
> Sy com je voy. . . . (lines 1–6)
> [People who say that dreams are nothing but fables and lies, as it is said in the *Roman de la Rose,* in the text, not in the gloss, have not experienced many, as I see.]

The dreamer then goes on to recount a midnight vision he has recently experienced. Dream literature permits an author to state supposed truths without taking responsibility for them, truths that appear unbidden. The *Rose* promises to reveal the entire story of love; the "Songe véritable" reveals the story of the impoverishment of the kingdom. The dreamer's vision begins in a palace where the king, poorly attired, sat with a poor company representing the various regions of France.

> Premierement je vy un Roy
> Qui n'estoit pas de grant arroy,
> Mais paré fu, con m'est advis,
> De menuettes fleurs de lis,
> Et avoit en sa compaignie
> En povre estat assez mesgnie,
> Qui prestes estoient du servir

De ly amer et obeir
Par semblant de vouloir commun.
Aussy plusieurs vy du commun,
Comme bourgeois et hostelliers
Et autres gens de tous mestiers . . . (lines 33–44)
[First I saw a king, who was not dressed in fine array, but was decorated, it seemed to me, in small *fleurs de lys,* and in his company a number of followers in poor estate who were ready to serve, love, and obey him, apparently because of a common desire. I also saw some common people, such as bourgeois and hotel keepers, and other people of all trades.]

Also present are Fortune, Dampnacion, Reformacion, Chascun, and Souferance. Chascun is prodded by Povreté to speak to Souferance:

Mais Povreté premierement
Fist parler Chascun vrayment
Qui là estoit . . . (lines 69–71)
[But Povreté first had Chascun, who was there, speak. . . .]

Chascun agrees, explaining how he has been robbed of his daughter, Pecune or property, and has now been threatened with the loss of his second daughter. Souferance replies that it is not her fault. She cannot help the situation; she just does what she is told. Nonetheless, she advises Chascun to seek out Verité to verify that his money is at least going to the king, to whom it belongs. Chascun acquiesces and sends Povreté off to find Verité.

But Povreté quickly returns with the news that although she has searched in the homes of the courtiers, she has not discovered the truth: Verité is not to be found there. Nor does Verité reside at Châtelet, in the Parlement, with "chanoines, dyacres, chantres, doyens, arcedyacres" or with "tresoriers et generaux," with the religious orders, with "juges, clercs seculiers," or with "advocas, gens d'eglise ou gens qui mainnent marchandise." No one is talking.

Unable to find the truth about where the money is going, Souferance advises that they turn to Commune Renommé, "public knowledge" or "hearsay," to find out whether the king is receiving his due. Commune Renommé verifies Chascun's hunch that the king's funds are being appropriated by someone else, and calls in Excusacion as a witness that the king is not to blame; the poor monarch is just as impoverished as Chascun. To blame for the disgraceful situation is Faulx Gouvernement. Questioned, Faulx Gouvernement admits his guilt, followed by Experience, who in her mirror reveals at length and in detail the characters of the greedy culprits responsible

for the situation: Louis of Orleans, Jean of Berry, Jean de Montaigu, and the queen. When questioned by Commune Renommé as to how these individuals happen to find themselves in such a favorable financial position, Experience passes the floor to Fortune. After warning the characters that she might spin her wheel, Fortune cedes to Raison, who scolds each of the guilty parties in turn. Finally Dampnacion threatens them, before the "*acteur*" or author-narrator of the poem issues a final warning.

Commune Renommé occupies a crucial spot in the cast of allegorical figures pursuing the answer to the question of why the people of France are so poor. The figure is called in specifically to fill in when the Truth, Verité, cannot be found. Clearly the figure represents a sort of folk wisdom, a type of information. It has long been assumed that Isabeau was dogged by rumors about her cupidity. Does the poem, with its emphasis on the circulation of information that may or may not be accurate in the form of Commune Renommé, support this assessment?

It is important to consider carefully the role of the queen in the poem in comparison with the courtiers portrayed with her. Her depiction is significantly less unflattering, less specific, and contains far fewer lines than any of the others. The others receive four to five times as many lines as the queen, and these are filled with invective, lists of their possessions, accounts of their sinfulness, and details on how they have pillaged the people. Moreover, the horrifying ends awaiting Louis, Jean of Berry, and Jean de Montaigu are recounted by Dampnacion. The fate awaiting Isabeau after death, however, is not recounted. The queen is faulted for putting all of her thought into how to "prendre ce qu'elle en peut" (get everything she can; line 1035). But she is spared the more furious attacks that the others receive.

Most significant for interpreting the position of Isabeau in the poem is the monologue of Fortune, who recounts how she lifted Louis of Orleans, Jean of Berry, and Jean de Montaigu to great heights and describes how she will now make them fall. As for the queen, Fortune's story is different. Certainly Fortune helped the queen out by making her queen of France:

> Puis je la mis sy en avance
> Que je la fis Royne de France ;
> Et en son jardin j'ay planté
> De tous mes biens à grant planté . . . (lines 1727–30)
> [Then I gave her a huge advance, making her queen of France, and I planted all of my good things in her garden.]

But this is not the important point, for Fortune is not getting ready to deprive Isabeau of her riches, but something quite different. Along with the great goods Fortune planted in Isabeau's garden, the allegorical figure asserts, "Et ly fais bon renom avoir" (line 1731) (And I put good reputation there). The others are going to be deprived of their greatest gifts. The queen will also lose her dearest position. But unlike the others, for the queen this is not her riches. Rather it is her *bon renom*. That is to say, the fall that Fortune has in mind for the queen is not the loss of wealth she envisions for the others, but the loss of her reputation. Indeed, Fortune adds, she has already begun to erode Isabeau's good name: over the past months, the queen's reputation has suffered. "Si que en mains d'une année / Fu Royne mal clamée . . . " (In less than a year the queen has been talked about negatively) (line 1735). The timing, of course, corresponds to the chronology offered by Pintoin: his *circumspecti* begin to grumble for the first time in the spring of 1405.

And yet (and here the verb tense becomes a bit confusing), even as Fortune notes that she has already begun to damage the queen's reputation, she makes it clear that she has not yet managed to destroy it. For Fortune next claims that she will, in the future, turn her wheel and cause the queen such shame that she will be deserted by all: "Je ly feray avoir tel honte, / Et tel dommage et telle perte, / Qu'en la fin en sera deserte . . . (lines 1736–38). In other words, *Fortune* has not yet turned her wheel, or, at least, she has not yet given it a full spin. Just as she is plotting to bring about the fall of Louis of Orleans, Jean of Berry, and Jean de Montaigu—falls that have yet to transpire within the chronology of the narrative—she is planning to destroy Isabeau's reputation.

What we have in the "Songe véritable" as far as the queen in concerned, I would suggest, is not evidence of her damaged reputation, but a campaign that threatens to ruin her good name. True, Fortune has already begun, for the henchmen of Jean sans Peur have begun complaining about the queen. However, their campaign cannot have been terribly effective. Why would Fortune need to turn her wheel again if the queen's reputation had already been destroyed? The passage, thus, must be seen as proof of the queen's positive renown: what would be the interest if she were already detested? To state it simply, the poem indicates that the queen is perceived by its composer to be well-loved. As is the case with Pintoin's chronicle, the poem makes clear that someone wanted to damage Isabeau's image. But it seems equally clear that he (or they) did not succeed, given the subsequent lack of evidence of popular sentiment against the queen.

Conclusion

Although I have tried to emphasize the extent to which the story of Isabeau's unpopularity must be seen as the work of one faction rather than a general sentiment, I have not questioned the very notion of "popularity." And yet, the concept cannot be applied easily to a fifteenth-century figure. What would it mean to be popular or unpopular at that time? Jürgen Habermas's *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Enquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society,* published in German in 1962, argues that the medieval "public" cannot be defined as an aggregate of subjects possessing some degree of political influence along with the ability to examine and debate ideas and form opinions about policy or persons.[105] Rather, the medieval public is "directly connected to the concrete existence of a ruler," and as long as the "prince and the estates of the realm still are the 'land,' instead of merely functioning as deputies for it, they are able to 're-present;' they represent their power 'before' the people rather than for the people."[106] More recently, David Zaret has written of Tudor England:

> Although political communication took many forms, contemporary thinking on the topic did not accord legitimacy to anything resembling appeals to public opinion in politics. Access to a "public" space for discourse was a royal prerogative when it involved deliberation on laws, foreign policy, taxation, disputes among courtiers and aristocrats, and many other issues. Reinforcing this restricted model of political communication in prerevolutionary England were several widely shared, uncontested assumptions: that deference and patronage were core principles of political and social life; and that, at the hands of commoners, opinion was inherently irrational.[107]

Guenée reads Pintoin's account of the crowds' shouting "Vive le roi" and "Noël" during royal entries as evidence of the people expressing "sa joie de façon toute spontanée. Ses chants et ses danses longtemps continués après le passage du roi disent mieux encore combien cette joie est sincère et profonde." (the people expressed their joy in a completely spontaneous way. Their song and dance, which continue long after the passage of the king, show even better the extent to which this joy was sincere and profound.)[108] And yet, there was nothing spontaneous about an entry, which was accepted by townspeople as sort of pact. As Peter Arnade writes: "The entry served as a vehicle rooted in the notion of legal contract, through which both ruler

and townspeople publicly confirmed their privileges and duties with an exchange of rights."[109]

Habermas's understanding of the "public sphere" has been challenged by numerous scholars, who demonstrate the variety of means of expression the public had at its disposal. In her work on the theatre of Arras, Carol Symes has shown "how frequently and cannily people without the power to assert themselves through more conventional means (violence, wealth) gained other types of power through the use of public media."[110] Clementine Oliver has shown a "politically-minded Englishman" at work in the 1380s, creating a pamphlet for "readers like himself."[111]

Theoretically, Isabeau may have been disliked, and gossip about her may have circulated in public spaces. The point is that there is no evidence to suggest that this was the case. The two examples on which historians have drawn are clear-cut examples of propaganda that stage authority. Moreover, the historical situation makes the proposition of Isabeau's unpopularity difficult to maintain. In the midst of a deadly feud between two powerful opponents who formed the core of large but shifting networks of allies around them, we cannot speak of "popularity" but only of support at any given moment. As we have seen, the nobility lent support to whoever could best promote their personal interests. Isabeau is disliked by the Burgundians only during her short association with Louis of Orleans, when she formed part of a group blocking Jean sans Peur's access to the royal government. As for the Armagnacs, she falls out with them in 1410 when the king declares them rebellious and leads the royal army against them, and again in 1416, this time permanently, when she struggles with them for guardianship of the dauphin. Clearly at the moments that Isabeau was at odds with the factions, she was unpopular with them, but opponents in feuds do not like each other. In a more general sense, among the inhabitants of towns and villages, no "public" possessing the freedom to examine and debate ideas and form informed opinions about political leaders in Isabeau's lifetime has left traces of ideas. Officially towns supported one or the other of the factions depending on the loyalties of the town leaders, which was sometimes divided. This is not to say that townspeople did not hold opinions about the royalty, but these opinions have left no vestige. Indeed, there is no indication from any town of the realm that Isabeau personally was liked or disliked. As for Paris, one must ask by which subculture the queen would have been disliked. Jean Juvénal des Ursins, whose devoted service to the Orleanists earned him the enmity of the Burgundians, was *prévôt des marchands* of Paris as of 1389. Finishing up

this tenure in 1400, he became *avocat général* in the Parlement of Paris. He was married to Michelle de Vitry, niece of marmouset Jean le Mercier, whose wife served Isabeau until le Mercier was driven from power by Philip of Burgundy. It was Juvénal des Ursins who compared Isabeau to Blanche of Castile in 1408. Surely he and his cohort, leading citizens of the city, did not dislike the queen: nor did the bourgeois nor "des juges, des administrateurs ou des comptables qui ont besoin de leurs offices (judges, administrators, or accountants who needed their services).[112] She would have been perceived as the king's representative, and the king himself was beloved throughout his lifetime, because he was the king. As for the opinions of the Parisian *menu peuple,* to borrow the expression of Christine de Pizan, it is impossible to know what they thought of Isabeau to the extent that they thought of her at all. They were hard hit by the wars, blaming their difficult situation on the Armagnacs, according to the Bourgeois of Paris as of the assumption of power of that faction in 1415. But the Bourgeois has nothing negative to say about Isabeau. A likely place for complaints to surface would have been during the Cabochian revolt, and, yet, as we have seen, the queen was represented favorably during this period when she was represented at all.

The complaints registered in Pintoin and the "Songe véritable" do not tell us anything about whether Isabeau was well-liked or not. However, they do offer interesting insight into perceptions of her power by her detractors. She was considered important enough that the Burgundians wished to destroy her reputation around the years 1405–6. When we consider her as a mediator queen, this is significant; she yielded power or she would not have been a cause of anxiety. Generally invisible, she surfaces at certain moments, surrounded by the most powerful men of the Royal Council. Outside of the court, her position was not well understood. Still, it reveals itself to modern readers, from time to time, in glimpses, in the form of snapshot-like depictions that catch her in the middle of her activity.

CHAPTER FIVE

Isabeau of Bavaria and the Cour amoureuse

> Confraternities commonly attempted to control the actions of their members, at least with respect to matters covered by their corporate statutes, by holding an examination of conduct during their annual meeting and imposing various penalties, usually in the nature of fines or penances, for infraction of the rules. For particularly grave faults the usual penalty was exclusion from the society. They also frequently attempted to adjudicate disputes and (when possible) to effect reconciliations between members who had quarreled.

PHILIBERT-BERNARD MOREAU DE MAUTOUR, who in 1727 unearthed the founding charter of the institution known today as the Cour amoureuse, assumed Isabeau to have been instrumental in the institution's founding. The queen is not mentioned in the charter. Why then did the erudite antiquarian, member of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, and author of numerous scholarly *mémoires* on a wide variety of subjects, associate her with the institution? His argument, laid out in an article of 1733, was that surely this queen who had introduced luxury and magnificence to the court of Charles VI "avoit aussi contribué à y introduire la galanterie" (had also contributed to the introduction of gallantry there).[1] His reasoning, in fact, is perfectly circular: Isabeau must have been associated with the Cour amoureuse because she was frivolous; the Cour amoureuse was frivolous because Isabeau was involved in it.[2] But interesting for this study of the life and afterlife of the queen, Moreau de Mautour's assertion suggests that Isabeau had began to be floated as a prototype of royal profligacy during the first third of the eighteenth century.

Still, in the early decades of the eighteenth century the queen had not yet been fully vilified, despite the rumor of her promiscuity begun by the English and certain references to her as divisive by sixteenth- and seventeenth-century legal historians. Thus Moreau de Mautour's depiction of Isabeau as a frivolous fashion setter and instigator of gallantry is condescending but not vi-

cious. However, the tone used to describe the queen became more vicious throughout the eighteenth century. By 1763, Claude Villaret, author of the first French anti-Pamela novel, could fulminate against the Cour amoureuse, that "assemblage monstrueux," and the woman who had founded it in his *Histoire de France:* "On s'occupoit à la cour que d'amusements frivoles; et le soin d'imaginer de nouveaux plaisirs étoit devenu la plus sérieuse occupation. Le goût de la reine pour le luxe, la magnificence et la galanterie avoit encore renchéri sur celui des courtisans." (At court, the only interest was frivolous amusement; and seeking novel pleasure became the most serious of occupations. The queen's taste for luxury, magnificence, and gallantry surpassed even that of courtesans.)[3] In a similar vein, Pierre Jean Baptiste Le Grand d'Aussy, editor of a collection of Old French fabliaux, asserted in the introduction to his edition of 1779: "La Cour amoureuse fut un des fruits qu'enfanta l'esprit de frivolité répandu par la scandaleuse reine Isabeau. Heureuse au moins la France, si elle n'avoit que ce reproche à lui faire!" (The Cour amoureuse was one of the fruits born of the spirit of frivolity instigated by the scandalous queen Isabeau. France would be lucky if this were all there were of which to reproach her!)[4] As we have seen, the black legend of Isabeau reached its fullest expression in Louise de Keralio's *Les Crimes des reines de France depuis le commencement de la monarchie jusqu'à Marie-Antoinette* of 1791, where Isabeau became a harbinger of that unfortunate queen.[5] Madame de Keralio's image of Isabeau as prototype of Marie-Antoinette stuck, with the result that the queen has continued to be vilified into the twenty-first century.

Isabeau's possible association with the Cour amoureuse merits revisiting, as I suggest in this chapter. As a space of gallant amusement, the Cour amoureuse has been thoroughly revised. Many scholars, following Theodor Straub's article of 1961, believe the institution as it is described in its charter to have been a fiction, in other words, never to have convened, never to have existed except in the imagination of the author of the charter.[6] For those who assume it to have existed in some form, the institution is now believed to have served as a forum for amassing social capital and for the promotion of a new social stratum, "des hommes de chancellerie" (men of the chancellery), which was represented there in good numbers, although the nobility held the most prestigious offices.[7] Carla Bozzolo and Hélène Loyau, the foremost historians of the Cour amoureuse, describe it as an "épiphénomène reflétant une réalité socio-historique" (an epiphenomenon reflecting a socio-historical reality).[8] Missing from recent discussion, however, is whether Is-

abeau played any role within the institution. Indeed, the most recent serious discussion of her possible association is that of Straub, who argued nearly fifty years ago that because none of the figures listed as founding members of the Cour amoureuse was at Mantes, where the charter proclaims itself to have been signed, in January 1400 or 1401, and because Isabeau and her entourage were in residence at Mantes throughout much of January 1400, the queen must have been the force behind the charter.

I will not be concerned with whether the institution actually assembled for poetic competition—its purpose as stated in its charter. Some evidence suggests that such competitions may have occurred, but Isabeau's participation cannot be documented. Rather, I discuss Isabeau's collaboration in the composition of the institution's charter, proposing that this in itself is worthy of interest. Her purpose in creating the charter, I argue, was to enhance her prestige as mediator, a purpose perhaps partly playful but nonetheless serious to the extent that her political clout depended upon her image as a successful peacemaker.

To make this case, I address two principal points. First, although the charter proclaims itself to have been founded by Philip of Burgundy, along with his brother-in-law, Louis of Bourbon, it was composed in the midst of Isabeau's personal household. Thus it seems reasonable to conclude that she was involved. Second, her role as political mediator, the various elements of which I have been developing throughout this study, is mirrored in the charter. Although the charter restricts the poetic competitions organized by the Cour amoureuse to men, the arbitrators of the competition were to be women. Isabeau's role, thus, would have been to judge the poetry produced by the participants. Brokering peace and adjudicating poetry, ritualistic performances demanding a high degree of moral authority, share a hermeneutic: like the negotiations for peace between the dukes over which she presided officially, the poetic competitions of the Cour amoureuse would have placed her at the center, where her success depended on her ability to convince the observing public as well as the competitors of the wisdom and justice of her decisions. Moreover, the charter, which was similar in form to a royal ordinance, allowed Isabeau to construct and control the Cour amoureuse in a way she could not construct and control the royal court.

Over the past two decades, a wealth of scholarship has demonstrated the means by which queens of the early modern periods attempted through public display to calm warring nobles.[9] The displays of power enacted by Isabeau do not compare in scale with the elaborate entries and performances

for which the later Valois were renowned. However, the creation of a literary *puy* dedicated to the honor of women presided over by women must be regarded as a significant statement. For Isabeau, the Cour amoureuse, founded just as she was beginning her career in mediation, would have represented a forum where she could reinforce her authority as arbitrator of peace under what she already would have understood to be very difficult circumstances. Isabeau's mediating activity, I suggest, is the context within which to consider the charter of the Cour amoureuse. In the following section, I discuss the logistics of the charter's composition: who was present when it was created and what this might mean.

The Foundation of the Cour amoureuse

The Cour amoureuse is known to historians primarily through its charter (or, more accurately, through a copy of its charter) existing in a single manuscript with an accompanying list of the members' arms; and through five further manuscripts containing partial lists of the members' arms. In their indispensable two-volume study of the institution, Carla Bozzolo and Hélène Loyau collate information from the six manuscripts to offer a complete list of the participants along with their identifications—approximately 950 in total from 1400 to 1440.[10] As Bozzolo and Loyau explain, members are added to the lists throughout the years but are never crossed out when they die. Also, the members are preponderantly partisans of the Dukes of Burgundy, with a large influx of new members entering the ranks when Philip the Good succeeded his father, Jean sans Peur, after the latter was assassinated by followers of the dauphin Charles, eventually Charles VII.[11] If the Cour amoureuse was a fiction, it was one carefully maintained by the Burgundians over a long period of time. In a sense, then, whether or not poetic competitions took place is irrelevant. The Burgundians must have felt keeping up the Cour amoureuse to have been of symbolic importance. The details of the institution in its later permutations, however, are not central to this study of Isabeau's possible involvement, although they might fruitfully form the basis of further research. For the present study, the crucial document is the charter, which I propose to have been composed under the supervision of the queen. Because Isabeau's collaboration is essential to my argument, I will begin by making the case for it.

Supposedly narrated by Pierre de Hauteville, le Prince de la baillie d'amours (Prince of the Land of Love), poet from Hainaut, *échançon,* or

cupbearer of Charles VI and *écuyer* of Philip of Burgundy and later Jean of Burgundy, the charter records two dates.[12] One appears in the first lines of the document and refers to its publication in Paris at the Hôtel d'Artois, one of Philip of Burgundy's city residences (of which only the Tour Jean sans Peur on the Rue Etienne Marcel remains today), on Saint Valentine's Day, 1400.[13] The second date is found in the final lines of the document, just before the signatures, where the institution is proclaimed to have been "octroyé humblement en salle royalle, a Mante" (granted humbly in the royal hall at Mantes), on January 6, 1400.[14] This date is furthermore referred to within the body of the charter, which notes that the excellent and powerful princes, Philip and Louis of Bourbon, requested on January 6, the Feast of the Epiphany, that Charles VI create the Cour amoureuse. The charter, thus, appears to have been composed at the royal residence at Mantes on the Feast of the Epiphany and later published, or announced, in Paris.[15]

The date given in the charter, of January 6, 1400, is crucial in determining who was at Mantes when the document was composed. As Straub points out, it is not clear whether the date refers to what we would today call 1400 (that is, the new style of dating) or 1401 (that is, the Easter style). He admits that normally in early fifteenth-century Ile-de-France one would expect the Easter style to be the practice. However, he adds that humanists were especially attached to the old Roman system of dating the year from January 1, and that as far as the public was concerned, January 1 was New Year's Day. The holiday was celebrated with gifts and festivities on that day everywhere, including the Parisian court. To Straub, it is conceivable that in this case the New Year was dated from January and that the newly begun year was called "mil quatre cens."[16] Because plausible arguments for the usage of either dating style exist, Straub next goes on to investigate who was at Mantes in January 1400 and 1401. He discovers that the most important members of the Cour amoureuse all prove to have been elsewhere in both 1400 and 1401.[17] This is not necessarily significant: charters were often initially written up in the absence of the major actors and signed by them at a later date.

However, Isabeau was at Mantes on one of the possible dates of the charter's composition, January 6, 1400. Although the absence of people would not necessarily indicate their lack of involvement, the presence of the queen at that moment is a coincidence worth exploring. I would add that the queen's itinerary as worked out by Yann Grandeau demonstrates that her presence at Mantes was extremely rare. She resided there at only one other time, in late February and early March 1389.[18] During her second residence,

she arrived on December 18, 1399, and remained until January 19, 1400. Isabeau had been absent from Paris since the summer of 1399, when she fled with the children to escape the plague. She halted in Mantes on her way back to Paris, having received news that the epidemic had still not run its course. This is significant. The charter notes in its first lines that one of the reasons for the founding of the Cour amoureuse was "en ceste desplaisant et contraire pestilence de epidimie presentement courant en ce tres crestien royaume, que pour passer partie du tempz plus gracieusement et affin de trouver esveil de nouvelle joye" (during this unhappy and contrary plague at present running its course to spend some time pleasantly and to arouse new joy).[19] The queen, then, was in residence at Mantes on the date on which the charter claims to have been composed for the purpose to which the charter attributes its existence.

It seems reasonable to conclude, as does Straub, that Isabeau must have been involved in the foundation of the Cour amoureuse in 1400. But I would like to add another point in support of Straub's assessment. On January 11, 1401, the eight-year-old dauphin Charles (the second of three to bear that name) died, victim of a wasting illness that had dragged on for several months. It is highly unlikely that any of the royal family, whether the queen or any of the princes of the blood, would have chosen such a week to create a Cour amoureuse. This eliminates 1401 as the year of the institution's founding. We are now back to 1400, when Isabeau was residing at Mantes at the correct time.

I am also suggesting that Isabeau and Philip of Burgundy were collaborators on the charter. Therefore, I would like to revisit another of Straub's conclusions about the presence or absence of the major members of the institution at Mantes in January of 1400 or 1401. As Straub correctly points out, Philip of Burgundy was at Neauphle from December 14 until January 7, 1400.[20] Ernest Petit's itinerary of the duke's movements based upon his accounts shows that on Monday and Tuesday, January 5 and 6, Philip was to be found at that location (*sejour à Neaufle*). What Straub does not mention, however, is that Neauphle is separated from Mantes by a mere eighteen miles. The duke routinely made journeys of much greater distances in one day. He easily could have travelled to Mantes on January 5 or 6.[21] For example, Petit Barre, rider for the Duke of Berry, was paid for carrying letters from the king in Paris to Mantes, "a la royne de France, a monseigneur de Bourgogne et a monseigneur d'Orliens," on December 14, 1399.[22] On that very day, Philip's itinerary has him supping and sleeping at Neauphle but dining at Dangu,

nearly forty-two miles away.[23] The road from Dangu to Neauphle passes directly through Mantes, where he may have stopped. The journey from Neauphle to Mantes, then, is one that Philip could make during the course of a single day.

The important point is, first, that Philip and Isabeau were by no means separated by a great distance on January 6, and, second, that contact through horsemen bearing letters was easy; therefore they very well may have been in touch regarding the Cour amoureuse around or on that date. Thus it appears reasonable to imagine that Isabeau and Philip worked together on founding the Cour amoureuse. In the following section, I consider the vision of the Cour amoureuse offered by its charter to prepare my discussion of the queen's possible interest in such an institution.

The Structure of the Cour amoureuse

As I have noted, the research of Bozzolo and Loyau on the manuscripts indicates that the institution began as predominantly Burgundian and only became more so over the years. Furthermore, Philip's role makes itself felt in even a cursory examination of its structure as described in the charter. The charter, as we have seen, opens by announcing the date of its publication in one of Philip's Parisian residences. Its form is that of a royal ordinance, beginning with a salutation by the Prince de la baillie d'amours, followed by a description of the situation that led to the charter's composition. The details of the Cour d'amour are enumerated, beginning with *Premierement,* with the following points preceded by *item*.

After its salutation, the charter extols the virtues of humility and loyalty that motivated the founding of the Cour. These virtues are also those on which the organization will be based. The Prince stresses their importance, announcing that

> Par humble entencion et tres debonnaire amour, la glorieuse vertu d'umilité et la constante vertu de leauté reluisent clerement par toutes terres esquelles foy crestienne regente et domine, sy tres doucement que la divine providence repaist en maintes agreables mennieres tous ceulz et celles qui de ces deux tres eureuses vertus embellissent et aournent l'entendement de leurs cuerz. Et comme ce soit d'elles souverain parement aux mieux condicionnéz et que tous nos ancisseurs, nobles et gracieux, desquelz loenge durable est esparse parmy le monde en divers lieux, s'en

soient, leurz jourz durans, plus voulentiers paréz que de vestemens battus a or et chargiéz de pierres precieuses . . . nous . . . avons incessamment desiré la douceur de leur amistié.

[With humble intention and excellent love, the glorious virtue of humility and the constant virtue of loyalty shine clearly in all lands in which Christian faith rules and dominates, and thus divine providence nourishes in many pleasant ways all who embellish and adorn the understanding of their hearts with these two happy virtues. And because these constitute sovereign adornment for the best suited, and because all of our noble and gracious ancestors, for whom enduring praise is spread throughout the world in diverse places, were for all of their days more willingly dressed in them than in clothes of gold decorated with precious gems . . . we . . . have always desired the sweetness of the friendship of these virtues.][24]

The charter then notes that Philip of Burgundy and Louis of Bourbon, maternal uncle of Charles VI, asked the king to found the institution to offer some comfort to the court during a time of plagues—a borrowing from the *Decameron,* but also a reference to a genuine epidemic, as we saw above. The members of the Cour amoureuse are then exhorted to defend the honor of women, and they are warned that those who fail will be expelled.

The rest of the charter details how the Cour amoureuse will be administered. The names, numbers, and job descriptions of the various officers are enumerated, along with directions for keeping records. The order in which these figures and their coats of arms will be recorded is carefully outlined. The *grands conservateurs* of the court will be Charles VI, Philip of Burgundy, and Louis of Bourbon.[25] A list of eleven *conservateurs* follows, headed by Isabeau's brother, Louis, Duke of Bavaria, and including Philip's son, Jean, as well as the king's brother Louis, Duke of Orleans. Following these will be twenty-four ministers; they will be followed by officers of differing stations. Instructions as to how and when the group will meet and how it will conduct its poetic competitions are also included. After an initial meeting on the first Sunday of February, the competitions will take place monthly with each of the twenty-four ministers taking a turn at hosting the festival.[26]

The institution as described in the charter resembles a chivalric order, organizations intended to unite their members around a common cause—like Louis of Bourbon's Ordre de l'Escu d'Or, for example, founded in 1368. Such organizations abounded during the medieval period.[27] As we noted, someone associated with the Cour amoureuse produced an ongoing list of the names

of its members accompanied by illustrations of their arms. This emphasis on arms and the charter's purpose of "l'honneur, loenge, recommandacion et service de toutes dames et damoiselles" (honor, praise recommendation and service toward all women and young ladies) indicate the institution's similarity to chivalric orders.[28]

However, the Cour amoureuse was modeled in part on a particular type of urban confraternity, a literary *puys,* as well. Like the *puys* of Valenciennes, Amiens, Arras, Caen, Dieppe, Rouen, and Beauvais, the Cour amoureuse was meant to sponsor poetic competitions. And, like *puys,* it gathered together different levels of society under its auspices. It reveals a range of social rank among its more than 950 members from the king himself to Jacquemart, "petit bourgeois de Tournai." As Bozzolo and Monique Ornato have observed, the twenty-four *ministres,* listed just after the eleven noble *conservateurs,* represent a recognizable social stratum: "des secrétaires, des gens du Parlement et des magistrats des 'bonnes villes' du Nord." The Cour amoureuse thus promotes this group while reaffirming the primacy of the nobility.[29]

Although the competitions were limited to men, the Cour amoureuse would use the women of the court as judges. The finished products would be turned over to unspecified ladies, "pour les jugier a leur noble avis et bonne discrecion; lesquelles dames, de leur grace et hautesse, donront deux vergettes d'or, pour couronne et chapel, aux mieux faisans de ce jour" (to judge them according to their noble opinion and good discretion; these ladies, by their grace and honor, will award two golden branches, for crown and chapel, to those doing the best this day).[30]

With its mix of chivalric and literary references, the Cour amoureuse encodes a multiplicity of possible relationships theoretically susceptible of being activated. Still, Philip of Burgundy's intent to structure the social relationships of the institution according to his own vision dominates the charter. Although humility and loyalty to a central authority are the qualities that the charter extols—indeed, the qualities the Cour amoureuse was founded to promote—Philip, a tremendously powerful prince, lacked these; he, like Louis of Orleans, was dedicated to expanding his own influence. As we have seen, Philip was lord over territories vast enough to rival those of the King of France, and he put the interests of Burgundy ahead of those of the king, to whom he theoretically owed his primary loyalty. Philip writes his relationship to the king, as he understood it, into the charter, naming himself one of the three *grands conservateurs,* along with Charles VI and Louis of

Bourbon, placing himself on nearly equal footing with the king. The charter's narrator Prince, Hauteville, specifies that on the chimney in his chamber the Duke of Burgundy's arms will hang next to those of the king's, with the Duke of Bourbon's to the left.[31] Although as king Charles VI occupied the highest position of the Cour amoureuse, Philip asserts his position right beside him.

In terms of the importance of his own role, then, Philip massively overshadows the Duke of Orleans. Louis, as we have seen, appears among a list of eleven *conservateurs,* following the three *grands conservateurs,* but even here, he does not head the pack. He is preceded by Isabeau's brother, Louis of Bavaria. Philip's son, Jean sans Peur, also precedes Louis. The Duke of Orleans, son of one king and brother of another, in fact outranked both Louis of Bavaria and Jean by a great margin.[32] Moreover, as brother of the king and his favorite advisor, he was entitled to be ranked ahead of Philip. In a land where disputes over rank might degenerate into violence, placing the Duke of Orleans far behind Philip and his Burgundian allies and family is significant. The preponderance of the Burgundian vision of the Cour amoureuse is further revealed by certain omissions. Orleanist *grand maître d'hôtel du roi,* Jean de Montaigu, who was executed by Jean sans Peur of Burgundy in 1409, is notably absent. In later years there is no trace of the renowned poet and son of Louis of Orleans, Charles of Orleans—for obvious reasons. Still, the members of the circle of Louis of Orleans were not entirely absent. Orleanists Bureau de Danmartin, patron of Laurent de Premierfait, figures among the members. Humanists Gontier and Pierre Col are included, along with Jean de Montreuil. Charles d'Albret, Guillaume Cousinot, and Guillaume de Tignonville were also there. But the size of the Orleanist circle, relative to the Burgundian circle, only demonstrates all the more effectively who Philip believed to be in charge.[33] Philip's control of the Cour amoureuse is additionally manifest in the large number of members hailing from Tournai, a Flemish *bonne ville* traditionally loyal to the Duke of Burgundy, surpassing in number the contingent from any other town of the kingdom.[34] The wide swath of society from the royal to the relatively humble represented in the Cour amoureuse proclaims the Duke of Burgundy's extensive power.

The charter, then, describes a Burgundian institution. But why would Philip have helped to create such an institution? There is no reason to discount the charter's claim that it was drawn up to offer a pleasant pastime during a dark period of plague. Isabeau and Philip, working together, created a document that marginalized Louis of Orleans, for the amusement of those present. In fact, the Cour amoureuse may have elicited a response from the

Duke of Orleans in the form of a poem of 1401 composed by Christine de Pizan. In "Le Dit de la rose," the god of love sends his messenger, the goddess Loyalty, to speak at a Valentine's Day gathering, where she invites the Duke of Orleans and his dinner guests to form a new order, the Order of the Rose.[35] This order will be dedicated to honoring women and containing gossip. Everyone present accepts the invitation, and, pleased, Loyalty flies back to Love to tell him the good news. The sleeping narrator of the poem is awakened later in the night, after she has already witnessed the appearance of Loyalty, by a glowing light and a voice that reminds her that physical strength is merely vulgar if not accompanied by inner goodness, "bontez qui viennent de l'ame" (110, line 359). The voice explains that Love is greatly saddened by the rampant slander perpetrated against both women and men. Slander, *médire,* is a terrible force, a double-edged sword, one that kills both the slanderer and the slandered (112, lines 418–20). To halt the acid-dripping tongues, Love has sent Loyalty to create a new order.

The Cour amoureuse, then, may have been a poetic fiction. And yet, some evidence suggests that it met, as well, or, at least, that it may have been intended to produce poetic competition from time to time when the charter was created. A few scattered pieces of evidence suggest occasional assemblies. Arthur Piaget published in 1902 an item from the accounts of the Hôtel de Ville of Amiens, noting that a certain herald called Jacquemart David had been paid for delivering an announcement from the Prince d'amour that a feast and meeting of the Cour amoureuse was to take place in Paris on April 15, 1410.[36] Another sign can be found in the description of the city of Paris, supposedly written in 1407, where Guillebert de Metz recounts the wonders of the city, among them artists like the diamond carver, Herman, the goldsmith, Willelm, the brass worker, Andry, illuminators, and scribes, like Flamel. He goes on to mention women in trade: female salt-sellers, butchers, carpenters, and other ladies. He then remarks upon Christine de Pizan. Finally, he acknowledges the Prince d'amour, "qui tenoit avec lui musiciens et galans qui toutes manières de chançons, balades, rondeux, virelais et autres dictiés amoureux savoient faire et chanter" (surrounded by musicians and gallants, who knew how to sing all manner of songs, ballads, rounds, virelais, and other love ditties).[37] Finally, a poem composed between 1408 and 1413 by Amé Malingre, member of the Cour amoureuse, describes a scenario wherein the narrator comes across a lady lamenting her vilification. She asks him to see that the complaint she has turned into a poem be presented before Pierre de Hauteville and the other members of the Cour

amoureuse.[38] Although the itinerary of the Duke of Burgundy never mentions explicitly a meeting of the institution, Philip offered frequent dinners in Paris that may have provided occasions for such gatherings. And as we have seen, the arms of members continued to be added to lists until about 1440, which suggests that even if poetic competitions were not the institution's main activity, the Burgundians considered it useful enough to bother to support for at least forty years.

Emma Cayley has analyzed poetic debate in late medieval France, a type of competition that "fed on earlier intellectual, legal, and literary structures, and in which an economy of exchange was nourished between debating poets."[39] Jane Taylor has teased out some of the social significance of medieval poetic competition, an activity that she describes as a means of winning "symbolic capital" for its talented participants. The stake here, as in "any particular field is 'power,'" she writes, because "a field is an *espace de jeu* or *champ du pouvoir* in which players manoeuvre, more or less expertly, to acquire a reward, a symbolic capital, which may be to do with rank, or pecuniary advantage, or merely self-esteem and prestige."[40] We might posit, then, that in a general sense the charter transcodes the strife between the dukes into a setting of poetic competition. If the Cour amoureuse met from time to time it would have allowed Isabeau and the Burgundians to amass the "symbolic capital" to which Taylor refers. Much activity at the court was already devoted precisely to enhancing prestige: the elaborate *étrennes* exchanged on New Year's, the processions and feasts at which rank was strictly followed, the handing out of liveries. Moreover, the relegation of Louis of Orleans to position inferior to that of his cousin, Jean sans Peur, suggests the sort of creative imagining of social structure such spectacles offered. Louis's inclusion at a relatively low rank would have been more satisfying to Philip and Isabeau than his exclusion, a means of symbolically containing him.

Isabeau and the Cour amoureuse

In this section I consider connections between the roles of political mediator and that of poetic adjudicator within a *puy.* As I demonstrated in chapter three, Isabeau is frequently portrayed mediating in the chronicles. In addition to chronicles and the royal ordinances that assign her the job of mediating, Isabeau's reputation for conciliation is noted by Christine de Pizan. In 1401, Christine sought to involve the queen in the debate over the *Roman de la Rose* by dedicating the collected documents of the exchange to her, praising

the virtue, which "est trouvee en vostre noble entendement" (is found in your noble intelligence).[41] Four years later, when the armies of the Dukes of Orleans and Burgundy faced each other, poised for conflict, Christine wrote an open letter to the queen, "An Epistle to the Queen of France," detailing Isabeau's aptness for mediating between the parties and depicting the French supplicating her to come to their aid. "Haulte Dame," writes the poet,

> ne vous soit grief oïr les ramentevances en piteux regrais des adouléz supplians Françoys, a present reampliz d'affliccion et tretresse, qui a humble a plaine de plours crient a vous, leur souveraine et redoubtee Dame, priant, pour Dieu mercy, que humble pitié vueille monstrer a vostre begnin cuer leur desolacion et misere, pay cy que prouchine paix entre ces .II. haulz princes germains de sanc et naturelment amis, mais a present par estrange Fortune meuz a aucune contencion, ensemble veuilliez procurer et empetrer.
> [High Lady, do willingly hear the complaint and pitiful regrets of the suffering and suppliant French people now full of affliction and sadness, and who cry with tearful voices to you, their supreme and revered Lady, praying, by the mercy of God, that a humble pity may show to your tender heart their desolation and misery, so that you can proceed and obtain peace soon between these two princes of the same blood and who are loved ones by nature, but who are at present brought to a quarrel by strange Fortune.][42]

In the *Livre de la cité des dames,* also of 1405, Christine emphasizes the queen's special aptitude for effecting reconciliation, praising the woman "en laquelle n'a riam de cruaulté, extorcion ne quelconques mal vice, mais tout bonne amour et benignité vers ses subgés" (in whom is nothing of cruelty, extortion, or any evil vice, but only good love and beneficence towards her subjects).[43]

However, the allegorical pastoral known as the *Pastoralet* (ca. 1422), which recounts the Armagnac-Burgundian conflict, is perhaps the most evocative of the representations of Isabeau as mediator for the purposes of this chapter, because it conflates political mediation and poetic adjudication in the character Belligère, a shepherdess, who is meant to represent Isabeau, as the text's own notes explain. Jane Taylor remarks on the importance of the *Pastoralet* as evidence about poetic competition but does not expand on what it indicates about Isabeau. I would like to develop here what the allegory suggests about the queen's possible association with the Cour amoureuse.

Although we cannot use the work to argue that Isabeau literally presided over the Cour amoureuse, the work does strongly support what I have been arguing in this chapter, first, that the idea that Isabeau, mediator between the dukes, would participate in a love court was plausible to her contemporaries, and, second, that adjudicating poetry could be seen as a metaphor for political mediation. The scene thus demonstrates very clearly that literary activity was recognized as a way of dramatizing and symbolically mastering political strife.

The *Pastoralet* recounts the story of the feud between the Orleanists and the Burgundians, beginning shortly after the death of Philip of Burgundy; the action thus unrolls six or seven years after the founding of the Cour amoureuse. The principal Burgundian in the story is Jean sans Peur. As we have seen, after the death of his father, Philip, Isabeau allied herself with the Duke of Orleans. At Jean's command Louis of Orleans was assassinated in 1407, and Jean himself was assassinated in 1419. The goal of the *Pastoralet* is to justify Jean's assassination of Louis. In the story, thus, Isabeau and Louis are represented in collusion, their political alliance allegorized as a love affair. Catching wind of the affair between his wife and his brother, the shepherd representing King Charles VI asks his cousin, the figure for Jean sans Peur, to murder his treacherous sibling.

But most relevant to this examination of the Cour amoureuse, within the allegory, the shepherds take part in a literary *puys,* reciting their own compositions before a female judge, Belligère, "qui fu sage / De rime" (who was good with rhyme; 51, lines 496–97). Perhaps Isabeau's role as judge of the Cour amoureuse was common knowledge. In any case, the story describes the poetic offerings of Florentin (Charles VI), Leönet (Jean sans Peur), Pompal (Clignet de Bréban), Lupal (Bernard of Armagnac), and, finally, Tristifer (Louis of Orleans). Belligère decides the contest in favor of Tristifer. This choice provokes the narrator to an outcry: the shepherdess, having been swayed by the fact that Tristifer's poem praises her, is unjust to award him the prize.

In its allegorization of the Orleanist-Burgundian rivalry as, in part, a competition for poetic prestige under the direction of a woman, the *Pastoralet* argues that Louis of Orleans possessed his power by virtue of his close ties to the king. The king is represented by the queen, who is desirable because she mediates the relationship between the king and his barons, as Christiane Marcello-Nizia has made clear.[44] The allegory is thus an attack on the king, who has wrongly diminished the power of his greatest lord in favor of his

brother. The allegory's depiction of political strife in terms of poetic competition thus correlates with the activity of the Cour amoureuse, at least as that institution's charter describes it, and sheds light on its status as a forum for displaying power.

The queen, then, was portrayed by her contemporaries both as a political mediator and a poetic adjudicator. To conclude this section, I would like to consider in more detail the nature of the connection Isabeau and her contemporaries may have imagined between these roles. Both required the skillful performance of arbitration. As we have seen, influential women often took part in mediation, sometimes negotiating, sometimes serving more ritualistic functions in keeping with the inherently peaceful nature attributed them by tradition. Documents recording the peace accords brokered by Isabeau demonstrate an attention to the types of ritualistic elements of reestablishing concord that would have been foregrounded in the literary forum of the Cour amoureuse, as well. Describing the accord of January 1402, a document, written in the voice of the queen, enumerates the actions that restored peace. First the queen called the Dukes of Burgundy and Orleans close to her (*Nous Royne, appellasmes prez de nous*). Then in the presence of the other princes of the blood, she asked them to state whether they agreed to the terms. Before everyone, they "respondirent l'un après l'autre, qu'ilz les avoient aggréables, et promistrent par la foy de leurs corps pour ce baillée ès mains de nous Royne, et aussi l'un à l'autre par leurs mains dextres, les avoir et tenir fermes et estables chascun de sa partie, sans jamès aller ne faire aucunement encontre" (responded one after the other that they agreed to the terms and promised by the faith of their bodies before us, the Queen, and each other, by their right hands, to firmly uphold the terms, each of them, and never break them).[45] In this way, peace was reestablished.

The relationships articulated through its poetic competitions would have transcoded those constantly being reformulated in the turmoil between the Orleanists and the Burgundians. Competitors would have performed the role of lovers through their poems, but a whole infrastructure of other actors would have been involved in a process that eventually produced a temporary winner. In the process, meaning would have been constructed and revised through shifting interrelationships between the different elements of the competition, elements reflecting a whole series of different oppositions: between the prince and the servant, the powerful and the helpless, the loyal and the disloyal, the glorious and the humble, male and female, the central and the marginal. Although the stated purpose of the Cour amoureuse was

to honor women, competition among such a diverse membership for poetic prestige would have allowed a number of potentially conflicting elements to find expression and resolution, including conflicts among individual members of the nobility. Thus the institution would have been a means of staging political division and performatively creating harmony among the divisive factions and translating political conflict to a level where it could be symbolically enacted and authority imposed.

Conclusion

The year of the institution's founding, 1400, represented a crucial point in the timeframe of what was to become the Orleanist-Burgundian feud. In the years just before the date of the court's establishment, the danger of armed conflict between the Dukes of Orleans and Burgundy escalated. In this context, the Cour amoureuse appears to be an assertion of their priority issued by Philip and Isabeau. It is interesting to note, however, that Philip raised the stakes on January 1, 1403, when he gathered sixty men together to create the Ordre de l'Arbre d'Or (Order of the Golden Tree), presenting them with clasps, *fermaux,* adorned with a golden tree standing between a white enamel eagle and lion.[46] The words "en loyauté" were spelled out in red enamel across the bottom of each *fermail.* The trait, proclaimed essential for members of the Cour amoureuse, takes on a militaristic tone in this new context. We seem to be witness to a heightened flexing of muscle from Philip, a shift from a symbolic appropriation of power to a menace of genuine military force.

Carol Chattaway argues that the Order of the Golden Tree represented an armed cohort upon which Philip could call when necessary: his "gift of the Order of the Golden Tree on January 1, 1403, should be seen as a clever, appropriate, practical, potentially powerful and timely tactic, innovatively developed in particular circumstances, to harness unusual and unchallengeable military support, dedicated to him, against any move by Orleans seriously to undermine good order in France, as presented by Burgundian control of the French Crown, and particularly to avert or confront any attempt by Orleans to take over the Crown and subvert the legitimate succession, even if Philip had to resort to civil war or to his family, through his planned marriages, taking over the Crown itself to achieve it."[47] Chattaway's research reveals that of the sixty members of the Order of the Golden Tree, only thirty-one belonged also to the Cour amoureuse. This suggests, writes Chattaway, that

Philip was seeking a "special network of men he wanted to parade with him, as a show of military strength."[48]

The Cour amoureuse, emerging in the beginning years of the of what was shaping up to be a catastrophic feud, sought to offer a means of articulating and ordering the passions that eventually led to violence. Despite our lack of concrete detail about the institution, the symbolic economy that we glimpse in the charter reveals much about the ways in which violence was imagined and managed in the late Middle Ages, and, because of Isabeau of Bavaria's role, of how women's roles in peacekeeping were envisioned. It is well known that Isabeau's attempts to impose harmony finally came to nought. As it recently has been remarked about the peacemaking strategies of Catherine de Médicis, the *mise en scène* could not ultimately "override reality;" sometimes armed force triumphs, "however symbolically charged the visual and verbal texts, however perfect their performance."[49] In the end, "reality demonstrated the utmost in brutality and personal ambition." The contrast between the Cour amoureuse, with its emphasis on creating stability through poetic competition, and the Order of the Golden Tree, with its militaristic purpose, poignantly illustrates the limitations of Isabeau's attempts at peacekeeping in a world in which armed intervention was the final arbitrator. But the queen's failure to end the Orleanist-Burgundian feud, a task that no one was able to accomplish until the conflict finally ran its course and came to an end with the Treaty of Arras in 1435, does not diminish the seriousness of her continuous engagement with the problem.

Reinterpreting the *Enlèvement du dauphin*

> Yet the unsettling of the poise and presumed knowledge of that narrative's logic should hinge attention on precisely what escapes and vexes its command, thus serving to gravitate attention toward the vectors of the text—a drama of feminine presences in dynamic relationship, whose field of play is referenced, not to the masculine texts and its signifieds, but to the figures and turns of a different desire. Repeatedly crisscrossing the narrative plane established by such characters as Gawain, Arthur, and Bertilak and by the worlds of the two courts are, after all, the reticulated angles and interstices of a feminine nexus, a spacing of women; and this other script, read for itself, recuperates the movements of another desire, in a feminine narrative folding into and between the masculine.

As GERALDINE HENG MAKES CLEAR in the passage above, feminine narratives require their own tellings. In the following chapter, I try to coax Isabeau's narrative from contemporary accounts of an incident that has come to be known as the *enlèvement du dauphin,* the "kidnapping of the dauphin." The queen's actions throughout the incident have been considered negligible or capricious. But they take on a different aspect reprocessed through an ideology appropriate to medieval queenship: when what Heng calls the "other script," "the feminine narrative folding into and between the masculine," is recovered from the chronicles.

To situate the problem of how to understand Isabeau's role in this episode more specifically within the study of queenship, when discussing a medieval queen's power, one must begin with "the definition of power itself," as Pauline Stafford has written.[1] "Power has been given a range of definitions," Stafford continues. "It is the ability or chance to realise our own will, if necessary against the resistance of others. It is efficacy, that is, the ability to act effectively, to produce effects, with some definitions stressing coercion, threat and force." But, Stafford adds, these definitions are not entirely adequate: "Feminist anthropologists, concerned with this overemphasis on coercion

and force, prefer to stress that power is the ability to have and follow a strategy, to be a social actor, to have long- and short-term aims and to be able to follow them—with the emphasis on strategy and pursuit rather than primarily on successful outcome."[2]

I suggest in this chapter that Isabeau's actions in the "kidnapping of the dauphin" manifest a strategy as well as its pursuit, even if they did not produce a lasting positive outcome. The first section of the chapter is intended as an introduction to the incident in question and the tense situation that resulted from it. My information for this section is gathered from the primary sources that historians have drawn on to study what transpired. These include the Burgundian-leaning chronicles of Michel Pintoin and Enguerran de Monstrelet; the somewhat Orleanist-leaning chronicle of Jean Juvénal des Ursins, although as I noted in the introduction, this chronicle is an abridgement of that of Pintoin up through 1411 or 1413; the notes of Nicolas de Baye, *greffier* of the Parlement of Paris; three letters of Jean Chousat, Jean sans Peur's treasurer and receiver general of finances, written to the Chambre des comptes in Dijon; letters to the King of Castile by Olivier de Mauni and Ferrando de Robledo; and a series of propagandistic letters of defense and accusation produced by the Dukes of Orleans and Burgundy in the thick of the dispute.

It is important to recognize, however, that the description of the kidnapping as recounted in the three chronicles I mention above as well as in the notes of Nicolas de Baye is based on the report of Jean sans Peur himself. It must therefore be kept in mind that the primary accounts of the episode issue from an interested party.[3] Because Isabeau supports Louis, enemy of the Burgundians, in the dispute, we should not be surprised to find the chronicles folding her role into his. But other sources offer important correctives to the chronicle descriptions. The letters of Jean Chousat, addressed to fellow followers of the Duke of Burgundy, are intended to convey information rather than convince anyone of the duke's righteousness. Therefore Chousat does not hesitate to indicate his master's weaknesses at different points during the conflict. The letters to the King of Castile are similarly instructive, because they are not meant to promote one side or the other.

The second section of the chapter revises traditional views of Isabeau's role in the incident. This revision is based largely on two pieces of evidence that contest the notion that the queen sat idly by while the conflict played itself out, suggesting instead that her role was more important than the contemporary documents indicate. These are a royal ordinance dated October

12, 1405, ordering Louis of Orleans and Jean sans Peur to submit to Isabeau's mediation, and the well-known letter of October 5 by Christine de Pizan, known today as "Une Epistre a la Royne de France" ("An Epistle to the Queen of France"), encouraging the queen to intervene in the dispute. The chapter then considers some other writings of Christine de Pizan from the same period, which offer a very rich but nearly unexploited source for understanding the queen's actions at this time.

The Kidnapping of the Dauphin

On August 15, 1405, Jean sans Peur, Duke of Burgundy since the death of his father, Philip, in April 1404, and Count of Burgundy, Artois, Flanders, as well as Lord of Malines and Salins since the even more recent death of his mother, Marguerite of Flanders, left Arras for Paris at the head of some eight hundred soldiers covertly bearing arms.[4] Jean would claim that his purpose in marching on Paris was to render homage for his maternal inheritance and to respond to the king's request that he come to discuss reformation of the kingdom.[5] However, there is no corroborating evidence that the king had solicited his opinion on reform, and, moreover, Monstrelet claims that Jean's purpose was to ask the king for money. Recently refused funds for a siege of Calais by the Royal Council, which was dominated by Louis of Orleans, Jean had been advised by his counselors to take his case directly to the king. It is well attested that the king was susceptible to the personal pleas of his relatives. As we have seen, the ordinances associated with regency show the influence of different individuals on the king's decisions.[6]

It seems unlikely that Jean would have brought eight hundred men, covertly armed, into Paris with him had his motives been benign. Rather, his entry looks like a challenge, a threat of violence, designed to provoke a specific response: the intervention of the king into his quarrel with Louis, to restore the position of influence within the government formerly enjoyed by the House of Burgundy. Pintoin tells us that Jean was ranked only fifth in deliberations of the Royal Council at the time.[7] Philip of Burgundy, who as son of one king and uncle of another, had occupied a central role in the government—meaning in a practical sense that he had had access to royal funds—had received about half of his total yearly revenues from the royal treasury in the form of ordinary pensions, gifts, and aides for military ventures conducted in the interests of the French kingdom by soldiers from Burgundian territories.[8] But these sources dried up with his death.[9] Although in April

1405 Jean had sent Jean Chousat to the king to request that the usual military aides and the annual allowance for the upkeep of the Sluis garrison be continued, and, although Chousat reported that his mission had been a success, the money was not forthcoming.[10] To receive sealed letters from the king authorizing payment was not the same thing as to receive payment, because Louis of Orleans, who was himself receiving much of his yearly revenue from the royal treasury in the form of pensions, gifts, and military aides, could stall the process.[11] Jean sent ambassadors to the king, queen, and the Council to plead this case, but according to Monstrelet, they had received no "bien agréable" response.[12]

The only way Jean could increase his own influence was by loosening Louis's control over the government. However, this would not be easy. First, Louis was powerful. But in addition, he had on his side the royal ordinance of 1393, which stipulated that he would become regent in the event of the king's death. While this ordinance said nothing about governance during the king's periods of indisposition, as we have seen, Louis extrapolated the right to rule from it.[13] The ordinance of 1393 arguably had been nullified by the one of April 26, 1403, decreeing that in the case of the king's death the kingdom would have no regent at all but would be ruled rather by the king's son, even if he were still a minor, aided by a regency council. But the ordinance of April 26 in turn had been partially annulled by a letter patent of May 7, 1403 (undoubtedly instigated by Louis given that he alone profited), wherein the king acknowledged that "certain" recent ordinances may have been damaging to his brother and that any portion of these recent ordinances that deprived Louis of his power were to be ignored.[14]

In addition to the menace Jean posed by entering Paris with his army, he also seems to have been threatening in a more veiled way to incite local revolt to further strengthen his bid for power, for he set off for Paris bearing a document detailing a set of demands for reform of the kingdom that he would produce for a public reading in the thick of the crisis that followed his dramatic entry and subsequent kidnapping of the dauphin.[15] The new Duke of Burgundy already possessed a store of good will among the Parisians inherited from his father, who had assured his own popularity by posing as reformer; this makes it all the more likely that Jean would have felt it necessary to invent the king's request to divert attention from his real purpose.[16] In the language of feuding, then, Jean's march on Paris seems to have been calculated to reactivate hostilities where they had been interrupted before his father's death.

When Louis learned on August 17 that Jean was approaching Paris, he understood the significance of his cousin's challenge. His response was to depart for Melun, one of the queen's fortified chateaux, which was about twenty-five miles south of Paris. Although Louis possessed sufficient force to prevent a coup, he needed time to call his men to arms. His strategy in leaving for Melun was to refuse to engage with the enemy, removing himself from Jean's grasp and forcing him to wait.

Isabeau's involvement in the incident must be considered separate from Louis's, although their interests regarding the Duke of Burgundy at that moment converged on most points. She would have recognized that to win control of the government, Jean needed to gain access to the king and win his complete confidence. Occupying Paris in itself would not necessarily bring the Duke of Burgundy the influence he desired. His goal in entering the city, then, must have been to persuade the king, who would be eager to prevent violence, to grant him what he wanted. But on either August 16 or 17, the king slipped into his customary mental illness. Insane, the king could not be solicited for favors.[17] The dauphin, eight-year-old Louis of Guyenne, thus became the pawn. Isabeau joined Louis of Orleans in Melun, ordering that the royal children, including the dauphin, and his recent bride, Marguerite of Burgundy, daughter of Jean, be sent to her there, in the protective company of her brother Louis of Bavaria; *grand maître de l'hôtel* of the king, Jean de Montaigu; the Marquis du Pont Edward of Bar; and the dauphin's governor, Geoffroy de Boucicaut (younger brother of Jean III le Meingre, the renowned Maréchal de Boucicaut). In this way, Isabeau tied her specific interest—protecting the dauphin from Jean—to the already existing conflict, in the manner characteristic of members of a feuding society, as the discussion of this pattern of behavior in chapter three clarifies. This explains why she appears to be both participating in the feud and mediating between its factions. The apparent contradiction vanishes when we think of her alliance with Louis in this case as a typical one of convenience, as a means of achieving her short-term objective, which was to prevent Jean's using her son as an instrument to impose himself as effective leader of the kingdom.

Arriving in Paris on August 19, Jean was informed that Louis and Isabeau had departed two days earlier and that the dauphin, the dauphine, and the other royal children were at that very moment being transported to Melun. Without so much as dismounting, he continued on through Paris in pursuit of the children, intercepting them in Juvisy, halfway between Villejuif and Corbeil, where Louis and Isabeau had gone to meet the procession to ac-

company them to Melun. Over the protests of their chaperons, the Duke of Burgundy insisted that the dauphin be turned over to him and forced the convoy to return to Paris. While the Marquis du Pont rode on to inform Louis and Isabeau of this turn of events, the others made their way back to Paris with Jean.

Because the royal children had been entrusted by royal ordinance to Isabeau's care when the king was mad, Jean committed a potentially serious crime in diverting them from the journey to their mother. He recognized that he faced possible repercussions, for the very day of the incident he composed a justificatory letter that he sent out the cities of France.[18] In the letter he forecloses accusations that he had intended a coup with the pretext, noted above, that the king had summoned him not only to do homage but also to discuss reforms.[19] As for the dauphin, he pretended not to recognize that the boy's departure was Isabeau's response to his own march on Paris with eight hundred armed men. When he arrived in Paris, Jean writes, he learned that the king had fallen ill and that just afterward the dauphin and the other royal children had been hastily transported away. Shocked because he had never heard of such a thing before, he had gone in pursuit.

The day after the kidnapping, August 20, Louis of Orleans protested Jean's justification to the Parlement of Paris. Louis de Baye records that the letter deplored the Duke of Burgundy's apprehension of the dauphin, against the will "du Roy, de la Royne et du duc d'Orleans."[20] The act was no less than a *crisme de lese magesté*. Moreover, the letter demanded that the court "ne souffrist ledit Dauphin estre transporté, ne entré plus gens d'armes par les portes de Paris pour paeur de commotion" (not suffer said dauphin to be moved, nor more soldiers to enter the gates of Paris for fear of violence).

On August 21 Jean took his case before an assembly at the Louvre made up of the members of the Parlement, the Chambre des comptes, and a group from the University of Paris, presided over by the dauphin in the absence of his father. His motive in gathering the illustrious contingent can only have been to strengthen his own position, increasing his popularity through his calls for financial reform, even though his counselor, Jean de Nielles, who presented the discourse that had been prepared before they had left for Paris, claimed that the Duke of Burgundy was interested only in the good of the kingdom: he was not looking for "puissance ou gouvernement."[21] However, an examination of the text of the discourse reveals not serious suggestions for reform—the point is crucial—but a list of conventional complaints.[22] The discourse mentions that the king is not being well tended during his illnesses;

that the king's *officiers* are corrupt; that the domain is in a state of disrepair; that the Church is being oppressed with taxes; and that the taxes supposedly collected for the war against England are lining the pockets of the Duke of Orleans. As we saw in chapter four, Maurice Rey has disproven the notion that the Duke of Orleans was embezzling money from the *tailles*.[23]

The university, appreciating the Burgundian's calls for reform, reacted favorably to the proposals outlined by Jean de Nielles.[24] Like his father, Jean sans Peur was generally popular with the University of Paris. Although he would later lose their support beginning in 1409, the year in which he gained effective control of the government, in 1405 they appreciated him for various reasons. Unlike the marmousets, Jean supported the university's privileges.[25] They also approved of Jean's support of the *voie de soustraction* for Avignon pope Benoît XIII; like much of the university (with the important exception of Jean Gerson, chancellor of the university, who generally opposed the *voie de soustraction*), Jean favored the demission of the pope of Avignon, in contrast with Louis, who supported Benoît XIII.[26] But the Royal Council, suspicious of the duke's motives, met that very night to forbid anyone's joining either up with either Louis or Jean.[27] The text of Jean's call for reform was also sent to the cities of the kingdom, and copies were sent to be read before the Parlement and the Chambre des comptes, where it was not received with great favor. The Chambre des comptes demurred when requested to consider Jean's proposal. President of the Chambre, the Archbishop of Bayeux, politely observed that the Duke of Burgundy was overstepping his rank:

> mess. de ceans sont subgez du Roy de nature, et obligiéz à garder ses droits et lui servir loyalement à cause de leurs office et par pluseurs autres raisons, et garderont tousjours leur loyaltez envers lui, la Royne, et leurs enfans, et vouldroient tousjours leur faire plaisir et service et à touz leur bienvueillans.
> [the gentlemen of the Chamber are the natural subjects of the king, and obligated to protect his rights and to serve him loyally because of their offices and for many other reasons, and they will keep their loyalty forever toward him, the queen, and their children, and they would always do their will and offer them service and heed all of their wishes.][28]

Chousat, too, recounts the obstacles that Jean's proposal faced in a document he added to the text of the reform he sent to the Chambre des comptes de Dijon. He notes how little impressed the Duke of Berry seemed to be with

his nephew's agenda, noting that the older man had immediately demanded possession of the dauphin, "qui est moult petit commancement de nostre besoinge" (which is a very bad beginning for our task).[29]

In an outraged missive of September 2, addressed to the Parlement and sent out to the cities of France, the Duke of Orleans attempted to force Jean back to the issue as he saw it.[30] How dare the Duke of Burgundy divert the children on their way to their mother, he demands, reminding his audience of the royal ordinances naming Isabeau guardian.[31] Jean was a lawless thug, endangering the peace and the security of the realm through his arrogant act of *lèse-majesté*. "Et pour ce requérons," he concludes, "sommons et prions à tous les vrays subgiez de mondit seigneur, gens d'église, nobles et autres qu'ilz veulent avoir ce fait en grant desplesance" (And for this reason we request, summon, and pray that all true subjects of my lord, people of the church, nobles, and others hold this act in great displeasure).[32] But the most serious of Louis's accusations was that Jean's goal was nothing less than to gain control over the mad king, "le voulant tenir en bail ou en tutelle" (wanting to hold him in custody or in guardianship).[33]

The Duke of Burgundy responded to each of the Duke of Orleans's charges in a lengthy letter of September 8.[34] He had prevented the dauphin's transportation to Melun because the boy was sick, having bled five or six times that day from the nose. Jean added that under the circumstances he had not believed that the queen had authorized the transfer, a not-so-subtle jab at the queen's maternal qualities. However, only Jean's accounts mention that the boy was sick; moreover, the letter of the ambassador Ferrando de Robledo to the King of Castile notes that Louis of Bavaria showed Jean three "cartas" from the queen ordering that the dauphin be sent to her.[35] Thus, the queen's will was not in doubt. In a final argument, the Duke of Burgundy insisted again that his goal was not to gain power for himself and denied that he had any desire to stir dissent and division in the kingdom.

The situation, already perilous, became more so for Isabeau when on August 25 the king emerged from his illness to enjoy a partial respite. He did not fall ill again until September 23 or 25. The danger was that because he was still residing in Paris, far from Isabeau and Louis, he was vulnerable to Jean. However, the king seems to have been protected by the Royal Council, because no record exists of Jean's directly accessing him. Noël Valois has shown that the Royal Council, which included the uncles, was composed largely of supporters of Louis. Although more recently Michael Nordberg and R. C. Famiglietti have disagreed about some of the specific attachments

assumed by Valois, all agree that Louis possessed the greater influence over the Council.[36] That Jean did not possess much sway with the Council is further revealed by the fact that when he arrived in Paris, the Council immediately forced him to hand the dauphin over to Jean of Berry. Also, at the same time the Duke of Berry was quickly named captain general of Paris, organizing the king's army to defend the city and prevent a clash between Burgundian and Orleanist troops.[37] To insure the townspeople's safety, he had the gates of the city closed and the locks changed.

Thus the first weeks of September were tense. The two factions waited, watching each other while their armies arrived; spies transmitted information; rumors flew; the soldiers for both of the dukes stationed around Paris pillaged. Jean increased the size of his army in mid-September. When he discovered this, Louis began to prepare for attack. On September 19, Jean was informed of Louis's preparations. In response, he readied his own men for attack.

But Jean had reached a turning point in his attempt at a coup. For at this point, he called upon the Parisians to resist the Duke of Orleans. However, his attempt to enlist them to his side failed. Pintoin reports that on September 24 a group of the ruling men of Paris ("majoris auctoritatis viros urbis Parisiensis") of the city announced their refusal to use their arms against Louis of Orleans. They reminded the Duke of Burgundy that they answered only to the king or the dauphin.[38] Juvénal des Ursins reports the reaction of the Parisian bourgeois as well, although he does not give a date. To Jean's request that they take arms on the field with him when he would go ("s'armassent sur les champs avec luy quand il iroit"), they replied that they would guard their city; as for the invitation to take arms or leave with him, they would not do it ("qu'ils garderoient bien leur ville, mais qu'ils s'armassent ny qu'ils saillissent avec luy, ils ne le feroient point").[39]

This refusal on the part of the burghers of Paris to fight with Jean marked the beginning of the end of this adventure for the duke. His situation had been favorable initially. Pierre Cochon's chronicle suggests that he was effective in promoting himself as a reformer, claiming that the Duke of Burgundy wanted the kingdom to be governed by the Three Estates, like in olden times ("voulait le duc de Bourgogne que le royaume fût gouverné par les Trois Etats comme autrefois").[40] However, favorable as this image may have been to some, Jean's situation deteriorated throughout the month of September. On September 27, Chousat reported that the duke's expenses were an "orreur de le dire."[41] He also complained of the Duke of Burgundy's

dogged attachment to his pretended program of reform and the equally dogged refusal of his targets to play his game. According to him, the Royal Council "traveillent mondit seigneur par grans delays, et lui donne [*sic*] esperence de pourveoir aux requestes que mondit seigneur et mess. ses freres ont faictes pour le bien du Roy et de son Royaulme, mais rien ne s'en fait toutevoyes" (work my lord with great delays, and they give him hope of realizing the requests my lord and his brother have made for the good of the king and his kingdom, but still nothing happens).[42]

On the same day that Chousat reported on the duke's tremendous expenses in keeping his army in Paris, Isabeau and Louis made a first move to restore peace, leaving Melun for Corbeil. Negotiations began soon afterward, with the help of the royal uncles. On October 5, Isabeau was specially solicited to intervene in the conflict in a letter by Christine de Pizan, and she was finally officially authorized to do so by an ordinance of the Royal Council on October 12.

A peace treaty was signed on October 16, temporarily heading off disaster.

The Queen's Role: Reexamining the Situation

The classic article on the "kidnapping of the dauphin" episode is that of Léon Mirot, "L'Enlèvement du dauphin et le premier conflit entre Jean sans Peur et Louis d'Orléans (1405)." The article collects many of the relevant documents in its appendix, and its analysis of the movements of the two dukes is thorough. However, Mirot reads the evidence through the optic of Pintoin, and thus, ultimately, Jean of Burgundy. This accounts for the astonishing fact that the *enlèvement* of his article's title refers to the queen's summoning of the dauphin to her side rather than to Jean's illegal apprehension of the boy, and it also explains why Louis is the villain in the story.[43] As for the queen's role, in Mirot's account it is negligible. He barely mentions her—except to assert that "l'ensemble des faits laisse croire à une coupable intimité entre la reine et son beau-frère" (the facts taken together point to a guilty intimacy between the queen and her brother-in-law).[44]

Other modern historians, relying on contemporary chroniclers, have also missed the queen's presence in the dispute altogether. The chroniclers of Isabeau's time tend to fold the queen's actions into the dukes', seldom depicting her conducting her own business. This is not surprising; given her "interstitial" role, her actions would have been invisible to them. Recently, Bertrand Schnerb has analyzed the kidnapping episode without mentioning

the queen.[45] Scholars who do consider Isabeau's role have tended to view her intervention as tardy and deplore her lack of concern for the welfare of the kingdom. Jean Verdon, for example, depicts an Isabeau reluctant to enter into the negotiating process. For Verdon, Christine's letter pushed the queen to act. He writes that Isabeau and Louis "finirent par se laisser convaincre et consentirent enfin à venir le 8 octobre au bois de Vincennes" (finally were convinced and consented to go on October 8 to the forest of Vincennes) where the queen participated in negotiations.[46]

In contrast to these views, I suggest that Isabeau's actions throughout the crisis were calculated and successful. Her strategy was to hold out until Jean's position had weakened. The Duke of Burgundy was quite simply too powerful to counter initially. Bolstered by support among the Parisians and the university, he ordered that the Royal Council capitulate to his demands for reform and threatened to force compliance with arms. Certainly Isabeau could not have persuaded him to abandon his agenda and go home during the first weeks of the conflict. But while the Royal Council, led by Jean of Berry, kept order in Paris, Isabeau remained in Melun, compelling the Duke of Burgundy to leave his army in Paris to his great expense and the waxing anger of the Parisians.

In waiting the situation out, Isabeau took advantage of the fact that the ordinances granting her the authority to mediate between the dukes were valid only during the king's "absences:" if a conflict arose, the disputants were not to resort to arms but present their cases before the *king*. Only if the king happened to be indisposed were they to approach the queen, "laquelle appellera devers elle des autres seigneurs du sang du Roy" (who would call upon other princes of the blood for aid).[47] The king was lucid from August 26 through September 23 or 25, that is, he was lucid during most of the period of the crisis.[48] It is impossible to know from our distance to what extent he was truly competent during this or any of his brief remissions (the length of time of his remissions varied; some lasted only days while others went on for months, as Bernard Guenée's chart of the king's episodes of madness attests).[49] Still, he was treated as rational when he appeared to be functioning normally. As far as we know, he did not request that Isabeau intervene in the dispute during this period, but, on the contrary, attempted to handle it himself. Juvénal des Ursins writes that the king "revint à aucune convalescence, il prit les choses en sa main" (the king recovered somewhat, and he took over the situation).[50]

However, the king could not settle the crisis. Early on, he sent a deputa-

tion to the queen and Louis to inform them that the Duke of Burgundy was ready "en toutes choses de faire le plaisir du Roy" (ready to do whatever the king wanted).[51] But they stalled, pointing out that Jean had done them great injury in kidnapping the dauphin and demanding that the boy be returned.[52] In Pintoin's account, Louis mocked the ambassadors, reminding them of the reason for the queen's displeasure: she was angry that Jean had spirited the dauphin away from her custody. Surely her anger was righteous, from Louis and Isabeau's perspective. The queen, after all, was guardian of the dauphin. Until he was returned to her, she would refuse to negotiate. Furthermore, Juvénal des Ursins explains that the king attempted to get the King of Sicily, who had responded to Louis's call to arms, to take an oath, along with the queen and Louis, presumably to create peace. They all refused. This is what we would expect. Concession at that point would have been declaring Jean victor.

To clarify Isabeau's position, it was very different from those held by other queen mothers in disputes with their opponents, for example, the position of Blanche of Castile vis-à-vis Philip Hurepel or Marie de Médicis regarding the Duke of Condé. In these cases, the queens headed factions who backed them in their disputes. But although Isabeau enjoyed the protection of the Duke of Orleans and his men at Melun, she was not a principal participant in the dispute between the dukes. On the contrary, their dispute endangered her own goal, which, as implicitly and yet unmistakably laid out in the royal ordinances, was to guarantee the succession of the dauphin some day. In 1405, she could not afford to let Jean take power and therefore allied with Louis, who shared her goal of preventing a Burgundian coup; still, interested in preserving the monarchy for her son, she was, like the king, above factional jousting.

Interesting evidence of Pintoin's perception of the queen's position vis-à-vis the dukes can be gleaned from the monk's account of the series of mediators who visited the Duke of Orleans in Melun from late August through mid-September. As is so often the case, Pintoin's version of the story is incorrect and is also indicative of how he regarded the queen. The King of Navarre, the Duke of Bourbon, the King of Sicily, and representatives from the university, writes Pintoin, went to Melun to plead with Louis to reconcile, and they requested that he allow the queen to return to Paris ("et reginam Parisius redire permitteret").[53] Pintoin is surely mistaken that Louis was holding the queen by force, not permitting her to return to the king. Still, his rendering of the situation is telling: for him, the queen is a victim of the duke

rather than his willing accomplice, a pawn in the struggle for power. Possession of her meant authority, and thus it seemed natural to Pintoin that Louis would hold her at Melun.

Isabeau, then, was not eligible to act as mediator throughout most of the crisis, because royal ordinances allowed her to take on the role only when the king was incapacitated. Her intervention might have been welcomed, nonetheless. But she refused for strategic reasons to begin negotiations between the dukes while the Duke of Burgundy was still strong enough to force the Royal Council to undertake the reforms (false reforms, as we have seen) he was proposing. I would suggest that in addition to fearing Jean's ability to impose himself because of the strength of his position in September 1405, Isabeau also must have doubted her ability to negotiate efficaciously between the recalcitrant dukes based on her past experience. Her success at bringing Philip and Louis into line up until that time had been minimal. The royal ordinances reveal resistance to her mediation. As we saw in chapter three, Isabeau was named official mediator between the Dukes of Burgundy and Orleans in March 1402. But just a few months later, on July 1, 1402, a new ordinance once again named the queen mediator. The need for reiteration suggests that one or the other of the disputing parties resisted her authority, and, indeed, this ordinance attributes its own reason for being to new disputes that had arisen during the king's latest "absence," which had commenced sometime before May 14. As we saw in chapter four, the king had named Louis *président des généraux-conseillors* for military aides collected in northern France on April 18, 1402. Returning to his senses near the beginning of June, Charles was informed that he had created an incendiary situation in awarding his brother this charge. According to Pintoin, when the king regained lucidity, he was approached by the Duke of Burgundy, who complained of Louis's profligacy. The king then attempted to appease his uncle by balancing the power: he named Philip to the same post on June 25, 1402.

To settle problems that would inevitably arise from this double appointment, the king reiterates the terms of the ordinance of March in the new one of July 1, 1402, which begins by calling upon Isabeau once again to mediate the new financial disputes, even though the earlier ordinance already had assigned her this role. The new ordinance observes that

> de nouvel soient meuz ou espérez a mouvoir aucuns mouvemens de desplaisirs entre nostre trèscher et trèsamé oncle, le duc de Bourgoingne,

d'une part, et nostre trèscher et trèsamé frère, le duc d'Orléans, d'autre part, pour raison du gouvernement de toutes noz finances venues et à venir du fait des aides ordonnez pour la guerre.
[once again, more disputes have occurred or are expected between our very dear and well loved uncle, the Duke of Burgundy, on the one hand, and our very dear and well loved brother, the Duke of Orleans, on the other, because of governorship of all our finances that have come and will come from aides imposed for the war.][54]

To avoid future difficulties, the king orders that the queen will ajudicate problems "durant nostre dicte absence ou les dictes autres occupacions, ou empeschemens qui nous pourroient survenir" (during our absence, or when we are prevented by problems or obstacles).

Thus Isabeau waited the situation out. As time passed the Duke of Burgundy lost his initial advantage. By the time the king relapsed sometime between September 23 and 25, Jean's situation had disintegrated to the point where he was eager to negotiate. Isabeau took action just days after the king's relapse, setting out on September 27 from Melun for Corbeil, a step on the road to Vincennes, where the peace discussions would take place. Her accounts show that she sent letters from Corbeil to the Dukes of Burgundy and Bourbon on September 29, presumably to inform them of her desire to settle the conflict. On the last day of September, according to Pintoin, she proceeded to Vincennes along with Louis.

However, her trip to Vincennes was interrupted by Jean, who summoned his troops and rode forth to meet the pair as they approached. Once again, one wonders why he felt the need to assemble his troops to ride out to meet Louis and Isabeau if his motives were irenic rather than threatening. Isabeau responded to the show of force with another refusal to engage, turning around and retreating to Corbeil, delaying the peace process and making the point that she would not be bullied into action.[55] Jean no longer had the upper hand. His position deteriorated as his men began to wreak havoc in the environs of Paris. Pintoin, normally partial to the Burgundians, notes that Jean's soldiers headed off into the countryside where they seized villages from the Pont de Saint-Cloud to Aubervilliers, helping themselves to provisions they stole from barns and cellars. According to Pintoin, the "circumspect" feared that the civil strife would replace foreign war.[56]

The queen's accounts show that on October 3 she made contact with Jean by messenger.[57] Having forced Jean into a position of weakness, Isabeau

took part in the negotiations at Vincennes. Her involvement is not related clearly in the chronicles, but evidence of her participation can be gleaned by reading between the lines. Monstrelet gives all credit to the princes, writing: "Les princes dessusnommez, avec eulx plusieurs notables seigneurs et grant nombre de gens de conseil se mirent ensemble et traictèrent par plusieurs journees sur la matière dessusdicte" (The princes named above, and with them several important seigneurs and a large number of Council members, came together and worked for several days on the matter named above).[58] However, Pintoin and Juvénal des Ursins acknowledge the queen's presence and negotiation at Vincennes. Juvénal des Ursins writes: "Dans le bois de Vincennes estoit la Reyne et le duc d'Orléans, et y allerent tous les princes estans à Paris, et y eut plusieurs gens de conseil" (In the Bois de Vincennes were the Queen and the Duke of Orleans, and all the princes who were in Paris went there and several members of the Council).[59] Finally it was decided that the Dukes of Orleans and Burgundy would submit their differences to the Kings of Sicily and Navarre and the Dukes of Berry and Bourbon, he continues. All three of the chroniclers, Pintoin, Juvénal des Ursins, and Monstrelet, note that Isabeau took part in the joyful procession following the conclusion of peace. Although she appears to have been excluded from proceedings according to his account, Monstrelet nonetheless mentions her presence on the way back to Paris once peace had been achieved, suggesting that whether or not he places her in the midst of the negotiations, he recognizes her symbolic importance. Juvénal des Ursins reports the extreme happiness with which she was received when she entered Paris:

> Le vendredy après midy, la reyne entra à Paris à grandes pompes. . . . Et estoient en sa compagnée les roys de Sicile et de Navarre et les ducs de Berry, d'Orleans et de Bourgongne. . . . Le dimanche, la reyne alla à Nostre-Dame en un chariot, et ses deux fils avec elle, accompagnée des seigneurs susdits, qui estoit belle chose et noble à voir.
> [Friday afternoon, the queen entered Paris in great pomp. . . . And in her company were the kings of Sicily and Navarre and the Dukes of Berry, Orleans, and Burgundy. On Sunday, the queen went to Notre Dame in a chariot, and her two sons with her, accompanied by the *seigneurs* mentioned above, which was a beautiful and noble thing to see.][60]

Despite the accounts of the chronicles, which award Isabeau a minimal role in the negotiations, it is clear that she was instrumental, for she is once

again named mediator between the dukes on October 12, 1405, several days into the negotiations, in an ordinance promulgated at Vincennes. Besides proving her involvement, the ordinance by its very existence suggests that the dukes did not willingly submit themselves to her arbitration. Juvénal des Ursins offers a vivid glimpse of the obstacles posed by their intransigence.[61] According to the chronicler, during the negotiations it rapidly became clear that peace would never be achieved if the Duke of Burgundy did not receive at least some of the reforms he was demanding. Everyone agreed that this was the case, but the Duke of Orleans refused to cede to any of his cousin's stipulations. Instead, he sent for the *prevost des marchands* and other important bourgeois of Paris and exercised his charm on them ("uza de moult belles et gratieuses paroles"), assuring them that he would do everything possible for them. When this became known to Jean, the prickly duke decided to put the Chateau of Vincennes under siege. He was dissuaded from this plan.

Still, the magnitude of the difficulties in bringing the pair to heel explains the sudden appearance of the ordinance. Announcing that its purpose is to reiterate the ordinance of 1402, the new ordinance pretends to have been composed by the then mad king, as was always the case when he was incapacitated:

> Par très-grant délibéracion de Conseil, Nous aions despieça donné puissance à nostre très-chiere et très amée Compaigne la Royne, de povoir entendre, vacquer, et besoingnier ès grans besongnes et affaires de nostre Royaume, en nostre absence, ou quant Nous serions tellement ocupez que n'y pourrions vacquer ne entendre; et que s'il seurvenoit aucuns mouvemens, desplaisirs ou descors entre aucuns de nostre Sang et Lignage.
> [By the very weighty deliberation of the Council, we long ago gave the power to our very dear and well-loved companion the Queen to attend to, work on, and take care of the important needs and affairs of our kingdom during our absence, or when we were too occupied to work on or attend to them, and if there occurred problems, disagreements, or discords between some of our blood and lineage.][62]

The ordinance goes on to explain that the king has discovered that Louis and Jean have called up men at arms. This is unacceptable, the ordinance proclaims; they must immediately settle their differences in compliance with the queen's arbitration: "Et que tout ce qui par nostredicte Compaigne feroit

ainsi fait, feust d'autele vertu que se fait et ordiné l'avions en nostre personne" (And whatever our companion wants to be done, let it be done with the same rigor as if we had ordered it ourselves).[63]

The ordinance then becomes threatening: if the dukes do not obey, they will be sorry, because "sur paine de eulx forfaire envers Nous en corps et en biens" (on pain of physical forfeiture and the forfeiture of goods) they will not be permitted to reenter the kingdom.[64] The Royal Council, including the Princes of the Blood, was present at Vincennes, observing the proceedings. It is impossible to know how its members came to create the ordinance or how it was presented, but the intent and effect of the document are clear: to reinforce the queen's authority to force an agreement.

Isabeau has long been assumed to have sat idly by while the dukes nearly came to arms in 1405. This is manifestly not true. Besides the evidence I have just presented of her participation in negotiations, she remained in contact with the Royal Council throughout the period of the emergency. As we have seen, the chroniclers note several trips to Melun by delegations that included Council members.[65] Moreover, on or around October 1, just after her arrival at Vincennes, she was granted a personal *trésorerie* separate from the royal *trésor* with her own receiver general of finances, Adam Bragelongne. Her revenues were henceforth to be consolidated and handled through one central clearinghouse. This particular version of the queen's *trésorerie* vanished two years later, although no explanation as to why has been forwarded by scholars. A new version of the *trésorerie* appears in 1409. But the reason that scholars have suggested for the creation of a separate *trésorerie* for the queen is that the pensions of her administration had long been paid irregularly, if at all; her household protested being at the mercy of the *maître de la chambre*.[66] Isabeau must have feared that disruptions like the one in which the kingdom was immersed would cause additional financial instability, which would further affect her ability to care for her entourage. A restructuring of such magnitude would not have been proposed, unsolicited and out of the blue, by the Royal Council—Isabeau must have had input into the decision, which means that she would have been in contact with members of the Royal Council prior to the creation of her personal *trésorerie*.

True, Isabeau took refuge at Melun during the first weeks of the crisis. But we should see here a strategy aimed at achieving a specific goal: a refusal to engage, an option allowed by the king's ordinances, until she had a good chance of success. This interpretation is further supported by her use of the same strategy at several points later in her career. In March 1408, she

fled to Melun in the wake of Jean's justification of his assassination of Louis, returning to Paris to assert her authority at the head of the Royal Council only after the Duke of Burgundy had departed for Liège. Later that same year she would take the royal family and disappear to Tours, once again refusing to confront Jean in Paris. Furthermore, the strategy of refusal to engage seems to have been widespread. The Armagnac party sat tight in Paris refusing to enter into conflict with Jean sans Peur's troops in 1412 as they circled Paris. Jean eventually turned around and left. The dauphin Louis employed the strategy in 1414, vanishing to Mehun-sur-Yèvre for a period of several weeks, refusing to engage with Jean. In 1416, on learning of the death of the dauphin, Louis, William of Bavaria, Count of Hainaut-Holland and father-in-law of the new dauphin, Jean of Touraine, refused to bring the young man to Paris. Caught between his family's longstanding ties to the Duke of Burgundy and his loyalty to the King of France, he waited in Hainaut, to see which way the political winds would blow. In trying to reconstruct Isabeau's role in the crisis, many pieces are missing. She is very seldom foregrounded in the chronicles. But this does not mean that she was not present and active. Because queens exerted much of their influence "indirectly," many of their actions tend to be hidden beneath the more obvious displays of force recorded in chronicles. In the next sections of this chapter, I attempt to fill in some of the blanks.

Christine de Pizan's Isabeau

Christine de Pizan's championing of Isabeau has long been unrecognized, obscured by the circulation of the queen's black legend in Christine studies. The legend persists because of a popular, highly readable, and still widely read biography of the poet, which has served as a crucial source of information for two generations. Unfortunately, along with much valuable information, about Christine, the biography passes along the caricatured depictions of the court of King Charles VI, of the Duke of Orleans, and of the queen promulgated in the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century histories with which I had become familiar during my quest for information on Isabeau.[67] Now that Isabeau's career has been revised, Christine's attitude toward the queen emerges in a new light. As evidence of the importance attached to Isabeau's peacemaking qualities and of how her contemporaries constructed the queen as a mediator, her letter, "An Epistle to the Queen of France," of October 5, 1405, offers an unparalleled example. Equally im-

portant, this letter, along with the poet's master work, the *Cité des dames,* makes a powerful argument for the coregency envisioned by Charles in his royal ordinances. Using the model of the Virgin Mary as coruler with her son in the "An Epistle" and the *Cité des dames,* Christine implicitly chastises the dukes for their attempts to control the government, much as Gerson will do more openly in his discourse "Vivat Rex," in November of that same year and elevates Isabeau above the unruly pair.

"An Epistle" has long been taken at face value, as a personal letter requesting the queen to take action, and, as such, it has been adduced as evidence that Christine believed the queen to be frivolous and lazy, neglectful of her responsibilities to the royal family and to the people of France. The faulty impression seems to be attributable to one phrase from the letter:

> Trés haute Dame et ma trés redoubtee, non obstant que vostre sens soit tout adverti et advisié de ce qu'il appartient, touteffoiz est-il vray que vous, seant en vostre trosne royal couronné de honneurs, ne povez savoir, fors par autruy rappors, les communes besoingnes, tant en paroles comme en faiz, qui queurent entre les subjiez.
> [Most High and Revered Lady, although your mind is well aware and told of what it should know, it may nevertheless be true that you, seated on your royal throne surrounded with honors, cannot know, except by someone's report, the common problems, in words as well as in facts, which prevail upon your subjects.][68]

For Eugène Jarry, "Les souhaits de Christine se réalisèrent, mais sans intervention de la reine" (Christine's desires were realized, but without the intervention of the queen).[69] Enid McLeod writes:

> Well knowing the queen's indifference to the welfare of her people, Christine ironically tells her she realizes that "sitting on your royal throne crowned with honours" she cannot know of their miseries except by hearsay; and so she hopes the queen will not take it amiss if she lets her know that her subjects cry to her for pity, begging her to make peace between "those two high princes, cousins by blood and naturally friends," seeming to imply that the queen was, as she should have been, above their quarrels. Then as though unable to keep up the fiction that the queen was not partisan, Christine delicately refers to the possibility that she may favor one of the parties, for which reason her heart may make her less inclined to make peace.[70]

Maurice Rey asserts about the queen's reaction to the conflict, "Une seule chose la tourmentait dans le chaos des événements, les retards que mettaient les comptables du royaume à lui livrer les sommes que l'on avait réparties sur elle" (A single thing tormented her during the chaotic events: the delays by the kingdom's accountants in delivering the money allotted her).[71]

But I would suggest a very different interpretation for Christine's "An Epistle," reading its purpose as performative, seeking to define and even create Isabeau's authority. Christine insists in the letter that Isabeau "can proceed and obtain peace soon between these two princes of the same blood." This was not true when she penned it on October 5, for Jean had only recently begun to show himself amenable to negotiation. Moreover, Isabeau had already signaled her desire to mediate by moving to Vincennes. The letter's purpose cannot be understood as an attempt to rouse the queen to action. Rather, it aims to shore up her image in the public's eye, to convince supporters to rally behind her and proclaim her authority to the dukes.[72]

Before analyzing the letter in some detail, it is important to pose the question of who its audience might have been. It has long been taken for granted that Isabeau was the letter's intended reader. But there is no reason to assume this. Giles Constable writes that "medieval letters were often intended to be read by more than one person even at the time they were written. They were therefore designed to be correct and elegant rather than original and spontaneous."[73] Because they were often read by the messenger, "it is likely that even letters considered to be private often became known to a number of people."[74] Martin Camargo emphasizes the "quasi-public nature of all medieval letters," explaining that because of this, there was little "distinction between personal and official correspondence."[75] The copy of "An Epistle" of MS f. fr. 508 of the *Bibliothèque Nationale* closes with a rondeau that suggests that the letter was composed for a nobleman, commending the work to the "Noble Seigneur" for whom the text was written ("pour qui je l'ay escript"), asking him to receive it with pleasure.[76] Certainly the letter was not addressed to the queen alone. Also, as Earl Jeffrey Richards notes, the letter appears, among other places, in a collection of medieval Latin and French prose letters compiled by the ecclesiastical judge John Stevens, sometime before 1460.[77] Once again, this suggests wide circulation rather than a single addressee.

Given the intensely public use of letters in general, it seems likely that Christine was writing to control opinion about the conflict and the queen's

role in it rather than convey a personal message to the queen. As Joyce Coleman suggests, the works of political writers like Christine were often read aloud in the homes of the nobility and the bourgeoisie, at least in England. After the readings, the audience undoubtedly discussed the issues raised by the works. Although similar studies are lacking for Paris, the flourishing book trade and diverse social backgrounds of book owners suggests that the French reading habits may have been similar.[78] In this way, ideas about recent shows of power and the particular related issues—in this case, regency of the realm—would have been digested, debated, and spread on to other audiences.[79]

To be more specific about the type of discussion the letter may have been intended to provoke, French scholarship has paid attention to the "entrée du poète dans le champ politique" at court during the last decade of the fourteenth century.[80] But scholars of English literature of the same period have proposed that court poets created as well as contested political power. As Larry Scanlon has written, poets "staked out the claims of a new vernacular tradition," for in kingship they did not encounter a "fully formed and uncontested institution. Rather they encountered a dynamic political structure in the midst of defining itself ideologically."[81] Poets did more than attempt to change their leaders' behavior; through the dialogues set up among themselves, the royalty, and the public, they sought to effect change by training the public how to view figures and institutions. Lynn Staley has shown the importance of this public input, writing, "This category of literature [mirror for princes] . . . gave a poet a means of addressing what became an increasingly broad reading audience of those who were concerned with the elements of government."[82]

Power at the Valois court was still highly personal, and influence could be exercised through physical contact with those in power. But, equally important, influence could be exercised by reaching individuals who may not have possessed a great deal of influence singly but as a group were in a position to apply pressure. Christine's letter to Isabeau seems to aim to instruct its audience—members of the Royal Council, perhaps—in how to imagine the queen's role and apprise them of her personal fitness for it. It also seems to demand that the dukes examine their behavior. Understood as addressed to a wider group than the queen, Christine's letter elevates Isabeau, drawing attention to her aptitude for making peace and distinguishing her from the crowd of mediators who had already intervened without success.

After opening the letter with an apology for her daring, Christine enumerates the qualities that guarantee the people's faith in the queen's aptitude as a mediator:

> Trés redoubtee Dame, ne vous soit doncques merveille se a vous—qui, au dit et opinion de tous, povez estre la medecine et souverain remede de la garrison de ce royaume a present playé et navré piteusement, et en peril de piz—ore se trait et tourne, non mie vous supplier pour terre estrange, mais pour vostre propre lieu et naturel heritaige a voz trés nobles enfans. Trés haute Dame et ma trés redoubtee, non obstant que vostre sens soit tout adverti et advisié de ce qu'il appartient, touteffoiz est-il vray que vous, seant en vostre trosne royal couronné de honneurs, ne povez savoir, fors par autruy rappors, les communes besoingnes, tant en paroles comme en faiz, qui queurent entre les subjiez.
> [Most Revered Lady, do not therefore wonder if to you—who, according to everyone's opinions and beliefs, can be the medicine and sovereign remedy for this kingdom now so pitifully wounded and injured, and in danger of worse—I turn and come, not to beg on behalf of a foreign land, but on behalf of your own land and natural heritage of your very own noble children. Most High and Revered Lady, although your mind is well aware and told of what it should know, it may nevertheless be true that you, seated on your royal throne surrounded with honors, cannot know, except by someone's report, the common problems, in words as well as in facts, which prevail upon your subjects.][83]

Isabeau is a powerful figure, Christine's "trés haulte, puissant et trés redoubtee Dame." Yet, crucial to this representation is the queen's in-between position. Christine refers implicitly to Isabeau's Bavarian roots, noting that she is not being solicited on behalf of a *foreign land* ("estrange terre"). Moreover, Christine reminds her readers that Isabeau is a mother.[84] We recall that in the ordinance of 1393 granting her *tutelle* over the royal children, Isabeau's aptness for the position is based on her maternity. Thus Christine does not ground Isabeau's suitability as mediator in a dynastic argument, promoting her lineage, but stresses, rather, the queen's liminality. This quality paradoxically guarantees Isabeau's appropriateness for the position of mediator: Bavarian and French, positioned inside and outside of the monarchy, she is the optimal focus for the social reclassification that Turner sees as the function of liminal beings, as was noted in chapter three.

Christine's letter constructs its audience as supplicants begging Isabeau to

take control of the situation, asking their queen to respond to them, the French people, who

> a humble voix plaine de plours crient a vous, leur souveraine et redoubtee Dame, priant, pour Dieu mercy, que humble pitié vueille monstrer a vostre begnin cuer leur desolacion et misere, pay cy que prouchaine paix entre ces .II. haulz princes germains de sanc et naturelment amis, mais a present par estrange Fortune meuz a aucune contencion, ensemble veuilliez procurer et empetrer.
> [cry with tearful voices to you, their supreme and revered Lady, praying, by the mercy of God, that a humble pity may show to your tender heart their desolation and misery, so that you can procure and obtain peace soon between these two high princes of the same blood and who are loved ones by nature, but who are at present brought to a quarrel by strange Fortune.][85]

It is not unusual, Christine continues, for fathers and son to disagree. But such disputes cannot be permitted because of the terrible harm they cause to the entire kingdom. Christine acknowledges the righteousness of the queen's anger toward Jean sans Peur, without mentioning the duke by name, as she stresses the superiority of clemency.

Women being innately peaceful, it is fitting that Isabeau, following the model of Esther and Bathsheba, be the negotiator for peace ("il appartient a haute princesse et dame estre moyennerresse de tractié de paix").[86] But Christine's epistle is more than an attempt to increase Isabeau's authority to mediate. I would suggest that it is in effect an argument for coregency as opposed to what the poet views as a usurpation of the king's power by the unruly dukes. For Christine goes on to cite Blanche of Castile, describing how the queen held the baby Louis in her arms, and, then, extending him toward the quarreling barons, reproved them: "Ne voyes vous vostre Roy? Ne faites chose dont, quant Dieu l'ara conduit en aage de discretion, il se doye d'aucun de vous tenir pour mal content." (Do you not see your king ? Don't do anything, then, when God has guided him to the age of reason, he will blame on any one of you.)[87] Isabeau, like Blanche, is a coruler, posing the monarchy no danger. Christine concludes her argument by comparing Isabeau's role to that of Mary, *Royne du ciel*. Like the mother of God, a good queen is the comforter and advocate of her people ("conffortarresse, et advocate des ses subjiez et de son peuple").[88] But, as we have seen, for Christine, Mary was also she who "a dominacion et seigneurie sur toutes puissances creés

apres un seul filz que elle porta et conceut du Saint Esperit qui est Filz de Dieu le Pere" (has dominion and administration over all things after her son whom she carried and conceived through the Holy Spirit, and who is the Son of God the Father).[89]

Christine is not urging Isabeau to action; the queen is already mediating. The target audience, rather, is Christine's readers. They need to be reminded of the precedent for queenly intervention so that they can push the dukes to comply. But because elevating the case for Isabeau's leadership over that of the dukes requires delicacy, Christine lays the ground cautiously, offering the quarrelsome dukes an out, a way of inviting Isabeau into the dispute as a negotiator without forcing them to lose face. Clearly Christine's appeals to Isabeau's "benign cuer" are not designed to move a cold queen to pity, but to remind the two dukes and a public whose loyalties lie with one of the two men of the feminine qualities that qualify Isabeau to exercise power.[90]

And yet, Christine pronounces severely upon the dukes in the final paragraph, concluding with a vigorous warning to "aucun puissant" (the powerful man) welcomed by Fortune.[91] If he does not conduct himself wisely and with charity, he will be forever condemned by his evil reputation. It is interesting that Christine shifts seamlessly from an example of the once powerful Olympia into what can only be a condemnation directed toward the dukes, moving from an example of a powerful woman laid low by fortune to a general excoriation of a powerful but wicked man. When he falls, he is chased off like a dog, reviled by a crowd of people who shout after him that he has merited his fate. The slippage makes clear what has been implicit all along: that in soliciting the queen, Christine is in fact condemning the dukes.

The letter reinforces the main points about female regency that Christine makes in other writings from the same period. In the *Cité des dames,* composed ca. 1405, she venerates the institution with her *exempla* of women, past and contemporary, who ruled with or in place of their husbands, father, or sons. About such women the allegorical figure of Raison (Reason) announces:

> Et derechief qui vouldroit proposer qu'elles n'eussent sens naturel de fait de pollicie et de gouvernement, je te donray exemple de plusieurs grans maistresses qui ont esté les temps passez. Et mesmement t'en ramentevray aucunes de ton temps, affin que tu mieulx congnoices ma verité, qui sont demourees vesvues, dont le bel gouvernement qu'elle ont eu, et ont, en tous leurs affaires apres la mort de leurs maris donne magnifeste

experience que femme qui a entendement est convenable en toutes choses.

[And again, for anyone who proposes that they do not have the natural sense for politics and government, I will give you several examples of great female rulers of the past. And also—so that you will better understand the truth—I will remind you of some women of your own time, who are widows, whose expertise in the past and still today in conducting the affairs of their dead husbands serves as a magnificent examples that a woman of skill is apt for all roles.][92]

Raison then proposes a list of illustrious female regents, beginning with the Empress Nycole (Nicaula), the Queen of Sheba. Situated securely within the Christian imaginary through exegesis, this pagan queen was even associated with the Virgin Mary, sometimes directly, with her entry into Jerusalem in search of Solomon and his wisdom interpreted as a precursor of Mary's assumption into heaven; sometimes indirectly as a figure for the Church; sometimes through her association with the Bride of Christ of the "Song of Solomon."[93] She is frequently portrayed visually with Solomon, recalling "the standard visual formula representing Christ and the Virgin enthroned together in the Court of Heaven."[94]

Following this figure of the Virgin Mary we find women of France who ruled in their husbands' stead: Fredegunde; Blanche of Castile; Jeanne d'Evreux; Blanche of Orleans; Bonne of Luxembourg, wife of Jean le Bon; Marie of Blois, Countess of Anjou; Catherine, Countess of La Marche and Vendôme.[95] These shining *exempla* of female rulership introduced, Raison interjects in forceful terms that God and Nature have been kind to women in making them physically weak.[96] This has spared them from perpetrating the horrible sorts of cruelties for which men have been responsible. Like "An Epistle," the *Cité des dames* favors female regency over male rule. Women rulers of mythology and literature are next introduced. Among them are the widows, daughters, or sisters who took up rule in the absence of a male leader: Semiramis, Zenobia, Artemisia, Lilia, Berenice, Dido, Opis, and Lavinia. The work, as we have seen, comes to a close with the installation of the Virgin Mary as the leader of the *Cité des dames*. While the *Cité des dames* praises women for their various achievements—literary, artistic, moral, spiritual—it begins and ends with regents.

In the fraught climate of 1404–5, a book promoting female regency could only have been interpreted as an argument in favor of the queen. Indeed, it appears that Isabeau recognized and appreciated Christine's support. In Oc-

tober 1404, she presented the poet with a heavy *hennap,* or chalice of gold, undoubtedly in return for a manuscript, perhaps for the *Cité des dames*.[97]

The *Trois vertus,* to which I referred in chapter three, urges the princess to be clever in her negotiations. Cleverness might appear to be a futile quality in the face of military force, and ultimately it was, in Isabeau's case. But the *Trois vertus,* like "An Epistle," serves a performative function, confronting the reading public with its own potential power. In its description of suitable comportment for women of all social levels and its emphasis on how fundamentally similar women's positions and responsibilities are across these different levels, the work promotes solidarity among women. Women of all walks of life are condemned by their gender to social inferiority; all married women are ultimately subject to the whims of their husbands. To make society bearable, women must cleverly manage the affairs from which they are universally excluded. True, the ladies of the final social categories of the book, prostitutes, wives of laborers, and the very poor, cannot have been expected to read the advice Christine offers them. Therefore Christine could not have intended for the work to arouse support among those women for the queen. However, their presence in the book rounds out the community of women for those who are able to read the book, reminding them of the wider society in which they participate. Indeed, the work is a "mirror" in that it reproduces the universe of women, making the phenomenon manifest to its readers. In its structure, the *Trois vertus* implicitly but forcefully promotes the princess as an essential element of the government and of society in general, and it demands that female readers themselves become conscious of their own obligations in maintaining peace. With the potential power of their role brought to a conscious level, noble women were better equipped to intervene in the conflict that was threatening to destroy the French kingdom. Here we once again rejoin Turner's work on liminality. Isabeau, like her sisters, is caught up in the paradox that crushes all women; clearly necessary to the maintenance of peace, the very tendencies that allow her to excel at the job guarantee her inability to impose herself. Still, because of her position both inside and outside of the royal hierarchy, she is able to serve as a link between the city of ladies and the city of men.

Conclusion

Isabeau conformed carefully to the standards of female behavior of her time and exercised her assigned role with circumspection and prudence. It is in-

deed ironic that she has been victim of precisely the epithets traditionally applied to women who do the opposite, that is, who overstep the bounds of what patriarchal societies deem to be acceptable feminine behavior. It is particularly paradoxical that that in promoting Isabeau as a mediator figure, Christine de Pizan in fact set the stage for her subsequent vilification.

However, as I hope to have shown, while Christine deliberately and fruitfully deploys the imagery of the paradoxical position of mediator-queen in a number of her writings, it is not for the purpose of taking Isabeau to task for frivolity or inaction. Indeed, although Christine appreciates the role of mediator for its ideological impact, she understands perfectly well the limitations of the role in a literal sense. In foregrounding the queen's in-between position, Christine emphasizes that she poses no threat to the king and that she is able to represent the totality of the French community. Isabeau is different from the central actors struggling for political control, who are threatening to the king and carrying out their own agendas despite their claims to represent the good of the people. She is a figure worthy of support.

No close examination of Isabeau based on chronicles and ordinances has been forwarded to support the unflattering image of the queen as vacillating, opportunistic, and ultimately ineffective political figure. Instead, perpetuation of her bad reputation has relied on straightforward readings of the chronicles and ordinances and on unsupported references to her degenerate sexual behavior, spending habits, and even personal appearance. Powerful under the right circumstances, the position of mediator queen was also dangerous, because it frequently aroused expectations it could not fulfill. When things went awry, those located "in-between" were blamed with a particular fury. Although her contemporaries did not blame Isabeau for the devastating Armagnac-Burgundian war, later historians found an apt object of blame in the queen and, applying age-old assumptions about meddling females, laid the fault upon her.

While Isabeau was not a visible regent, she occupied a position in the royal government that was both recognized and valued by her contemporaries. In this chapter, I have suggested a new way of considering the queen's actions in one example. Using the episode of the "kidnapping of the dauphin," I have tried to show how traditional accounts of Isabeau's role in the incident can plausibly be interpreted very differently and propose on this basis that the contemporary reports of her actions be reconsidered from the perspective of the mediating queen.

Revisiting the Treaty of Troyes

> La loi de succession à la Couronne apparaît fixée à la fin du XVIe siècle, époque à partir de laquelle elle sera communément et improprement appelée la loi salique. Cette loi de succession s'est dégagée sans plan préconçu, sans idéologie ni théorie. Au contraire, elle s'est élaborée progressivement depuis le tout début de la dynastie capétienne et de façon pragmatique, sous la seule inspiration des événements.
> [The law of succession to the Crown seems to be fixed at the end of the sixteenth century, the period from which this law becomes commonly but incorrectly known as the Salic Law. This law came into being without a preconceived plan, without ideology or theory. On the contrary, it was elaborated progressively from the beginnings of the Capetian dynasty and in a purely practical fashion, according to events.]

Isabeau's involvement in the Treaty of Troyes is a principal reason, or perhaps *the* principal reason, for her infamy. A recent biography of Joan of Arc reveals how the Treaty has served as a nexus in the popular imagination for different elements of Isabeau's black legend, a point at which the charges of corpulence, greed, promiscuity, treachery, and maternal unworthiness converge:

> Despite her weight, her shortness of leg and stature, and her ill health, she was infamous for her promiscuity. She was probably the lover of Louis of Orléans, her husband's younger brother. Her flagrant infidelities gave credence to the belief that her son Charles was illegitimate. In the Treaty of Troyes, which she signed in 1420, she suggested that he was not the lawful heir to the French throne. It is impossible to overestimate the importance of the uncertainty about Charles's legitimacy, both to him and to the state. The sacred power of the king was his, literally, by blood, and if the blood could not be traced to his father, he was on the throne, not by the will of God, but by a subterfuge.[1]

How a mother could such do a thing to her son is beyond understanding, continues the text: "For some reason, probably to safeguard her wealth and her place in the Burgundian court, Isabeau took sides against her son and in favor of the murderer of her lover. The complications of Isabeau's relationship with Charles, her disloyalty to her son and the kingdom of France, are perplexing to the point of incomprehensibility. Certainly the Treaty of Troyes is a historical anomaly: a mother explicitly supporting her son's enemies and implicitly casting doubts not only on his legitimacy, but on her own sexual probity."[2]

This version of Isabeau's role in the Treaty of Troyes of course represents "popular" history. However, because the image of the queen that it perpetuates does not differ substantially from the one commonly presented in "serious" histories of that episode, it cannot be dismissed. Two ideas that this version foregrounds have been particularly tenacious: that in the Treaty Isabeau cast doubt on the paternity of her son and that in her approval of it, she betrayed the *patrie*. The first point has long been disproved. Still, it continues to crop up. For example, a recent analysis of the discourse from Joan of Arc's trial holds that Isabeau pronounced her son a bastard in the Treaty of Troyes.[3] Therefore, I address the point here. The second point is more complicated and will require contextualization before it can be addressed. I have been arguing that the Armagnac-Burgundian conflict must be viewed as a feud, as a dispute between factions. Although support of the dauphin gradually came to be construed and, indeed, experienced by some as patriotism —a struggle to maintain the God-appointed Valois line, which in turn equaled for some a struggle for France—this was not the only paradigm, nor necessarily the most appropriate, that can be applied to the situation. Although many of the French had earlier demonstrated their strong disinclination to accept an English king when they crowned Philip VI and rejected the claims of Edward III, and although signs of a sense of national identity were of course discernible before the infamous treaty, in 1419 the French were not in a position to make a choice about whether they would have an English or French king. Henry V and his troops were in France, and they were not going to leave. As Christopher Allmand observes:

> By the summer of 1419 all Normandy was his: the major walled towns of the duchy, Caen, Falaise, Cherbourg, and Rouen had all fallen to the English besiegers. This marked an important change in English policy towards France. The day of the *chevauchée,* or prolonged military raid,

was now almost over. Henry wanted nothing less than military conquest. With it went the need to govern and administer lands thus acquired, and the demand that the inhabitants of those lands should recognise the legitimacy of English rule by taking an oath of allegiance to Henry.[4]

The choice, rather, was whether to continue the Armagnac-Burgundian feud. If, on the one hand, the factions put aside their differences and united, they might route the English eventually. If, on the other hand, they continued their feud despite the presence of Henry V, who was already occupying Normandy and planning to spread into the rest of France, it was inevitable that the English would hitch their cause to one of the factions and try to crush the other. Although the first choice, uniting, appears to be the better in hindsight, in 1419 all of the obstacles that had prevented the Armagnacs and Burgundians from resolving their differences earlier persisted. The hatred between the leaders was implacable, and neither side was willing to cede any advantage to the other for fear of extinction. In short, reconciliation meant that one or the other of the factions would lose power, which is also what would happen should one or the other ally with the English. Thus from the perspective of the faction leaders, there was no particular advantage to settling the feud. Despite the strong desire for peace among the larger population, the leaders were motivated by self-preservation.

Nonetheless, Isabeau long continued to seek a settlement between the factions. Indeed, she sought energetically to arrange an agreement between Jean sans Peur and the dauphin Charles throughout the summer of 1419. A meeting at Pouilly just north of Melun in July yielded promising results, with the men agreeing in principle to a peace the details of which would be worked out later. However, when the dauphin and his followers slew Jean sans Peur on the Montereau bridge, about fifty-six miles south of Paris, in September of that year, the possibility of a joint effort to overthrow the English vanished. This clear demonstration of mortal enmity revealed the queen's hopes of a united front to be futile. Still, she persisted. Between the time of Jean's assassination and her agreement to the terms demanded by Henry V in January 1420, she entered once again into contact with the dauphin, attempting to bring about reconciliation between the factions despite the intransigence of the opponents. The queen and her son were in contact as late as December 1419. But the story of her lengthy holdout against Burgundian pressure to settle with the English is omitted from the traditional story of Isabeau's role in the Treaty of Troyes.

In this chapter, I first explore the events leading up to the Treaty. I then discuss the reasons why the crime of treachery traditionally imputed to Isabeau is anachronistic: from her position in the middle of a long-term fight to the death between factions, what was taking place around her could not possibly have been construed as a patriotic struggle between the dauphin, representative of the French nation, and a set of rebellious traitors, the Burgundians. Charles, unlike his brother, Louis of Guyenne, appeared to have had little interest in bringing the parties to an agreement. Although we do not know what finally persuaded Isabeau to cast in her lot with the Burgundians, something or someone must have convinced her of the dauphin's bad faith. The terms to which she agreed in the Treaty of Troyes offered a possible solution to a feud that appeared susceptible of no other conclusion.

The Events Leading Up to the Treaty of Troyes

To understand the situation that resulted in the Treaty of Troyes, it will be necessary to follow Isabeau's actions from the death of Louis of Guyenne in 1415. As we have seen, Isabeau had worked with the Armagnacs in the months following the suppression of the Cabochian uprising, continuing to groom her son to assume his father's place and attempting to help him build a power base strong enough that he would eventually be able to dispense with the support of either of the factions and force them to reconcile. Beyond an excruciating loss for a mother who had worked so carefully and closely with her son Louis's death on December 18, 1415, represented a terrible setback to her hopes of uniting the kingdom. Louis had been likely to bring peace between the Armagnacs and Burgundians. Until the studies of R. C. Famiglietti revealed the strategy behind a number of Louis's apparently disjointed acts, this had not been sufficiently recognized by historians, who had relied almost uniquely on chronicles of the period for their assessment of the young man. The dauphin's motives, like Isabeau's, were not well understood by contemporary chroniclers, who never had access to all the information that would have been necessary to gauge his strategies and their effectiveness. To many of them, he appeared to be driven by caprice rather than a coherent plan. An exception is the chronicle attributed to Pierre de Fenin, which describes the death of the dauphin as a "grand dommage pour le Royaume," because the young man had possessed a great desire to keep the people in peace.[5] Even Pintoin, so enthusiastic in his praise of the

dauphin's actions during the Cabochian revolt, reports that his death was not much mourned by his contemporaries.[6]

Because the actions of Louis of Guyenne relating to the Armagnac-Burgundian feud will need to be compared with those of the future Charles VII to make sense of Isabeau's eventual reason for abandoning the cause of her son to support the Burgundian alliance with the English, it is important to consider the strategy that the young duke was developing just before his death. Resisting the attempts of the Armagnacs to control him, just as he had earlier refused to be the pawn of Jean sans Peur, the dauphin was carefully amassing his own power base. Famiglietti has studied the members of Louis's dramatically expanding household for the years just before his death and discovered that of the 536 people known to have held positions under him, "only two of those appointed after 1413 were also servants of Charles of Orléans [his cousin, whose father was murdered by Jean sans Peur in 1407]," and that these two, Famiglietti continues, were also officers of the king.[7] Famiglietti drives home the conclusion to be drawn from these statistics:

> It is obvious that although the prince's household was continually increasing in size, the Armagnacs were unable to effect a successful infiltration. Louis was determined to keep them at a distance, and he was awarding the positions in his household to persons who would not be swayed by either Armagnacs or Burgundians. Clearly, the duke of Guyenne was in the process of forming his own political party. The number of new officers he appointed in 1414 and 1415 is impressive, and the fact that the total number of persons in his service at this time reached the high figure of 536 is quite extraordinary. The percentage of increase is all the more apparent when one considers that only 352 people, in all, are known to have been in his employ at any point during the sixteen years from his birth until 1413.[8]

As we have seen, the power base that Louis was attempting to build cannot be equated with a modern political party, a fairly stable collection of like-minded individuals. Rather, like Louis of Orleans before him and the Dukes of Burgundy, Louis was attempting by distributing offices to form a base. Eventually this base would be powerful enough to lure away members of the Armagnac and Burgundian factions. At that point, he would be able to quash the feud. Following Isabeau's lead, he did not envision himself as a participant in feud but intended to force both factions out of power.

The loss of Louis was dire. The new dauphin, Jean of Touraine, had been raised by the parents of his wife, Jacqueline, who were William Count of Hainaut-Holland and Marguerite, sister of Jean sans Peur; Isabeau had not seen the boy since she had been forced to hand him over to his in-laws after his wedding in 1406. Given his family relationship, it appeared likely that the dauphin would be inclined toward the Burgundians, which would significantly hinder Isabeau's capacity to develop the base that had been her and Louis's goal. Even before Louis's death, Isabeau had begun to fall out with the Armagnacs, who, violently opposed to reconciliation with the Burgundians, had attempted to hold Louis on a tight leash. A Burgundian-controlled dauphin backed by the queen would pose an even greater threat to the Armagnacs than Louis had done; they determined to keep Jean of Touraine from his mother's care. Bernard of Armagnac arrived in Paris days after Louis's death where he was immediately nominated to the position of constable and appointed governor of all finances on February 12, 1416. Under Bernard's surveillance, Isabeau's ability to maneuver was circumscribed. But it was not only the Armagnacs who saw the queen as a dangerous obstacle. Since the defeat and exile of Jean sans Peur after the Cabochian revolt, she was no longer an ally of the Burgundians but was seen by that faction as attached to the Armagnacs.

In the meantime, the Count of Hainaut-Holland, well aware of the importance of the dauphin's physical presence to both parties, took measures to ensure that the young man not fall into the hands of either. Yann Grandeau speculates on the reasons for the count's hesitation: although a natural ally of Jean of Burgundy, the count's turning the dauphin over to the duke meant "se résoudre à n'être plus qu'un instrument docile de ses ambitions, diviser le royaume en deux obédiences, entretenir la confusion, perpétuer la guerre civile" (to resolve never to be more than the docile instrument of his ambitions, divide the kingdom into two factions, continue the strife, perpetuate civil war).[9] Thus William bided his time, assessing the possibilities.

Back in Paris, the queen worked cautiously while Bernard established his dominance over the city. As Pintoin describes the political situation surrounding Isabeau, the queen and those who governed with her during the king's illnesses wanted only an enduring peace between the two parties (*inter partes*).[10] In hopes of achieving this, they called on the Count of Hainaut-Holland to try to persuade the Duke of Burgundy to reconcile. In addition, they sent the Duke of Brittany (married to Isabeau's daughter, Jeanne) to Louis of Anjou, fervent Armagnac and father-in-law of Charles, Isabeau's

youngest son. The Duke of Brittany did travel to Anjou, but he then continued on to Burgundy—defying the queen, who had ordered against his visiting Jean sans Peur, apparently fearing that the two would collude rather than agree to negotiate with the Armagnacs. And indeed, the Duke of Brittany failed to bring about the conclusion Isabeau had been seeking. For this, she reproached him angrily and had it proclaimed in the name of the king that the currency of the Dukes of Burgundy and Brittany would no longer be honored in commercial transactions.[11] For his part, Jean sans Peur initially rejected the proposals of the Count of Hainaut-Holland. Pintoin's perspective on the machinations, which he claimed to glean from members of the Royal Council, however, is that Jean sans Peur was not fully responsible for the stalemate: certain powerful individuals who wished to unite themselves against the "enemies of the realm" intended to isolate the Duke of Burgundy entirely from the government, fearing that were he permitted to approach the king and regain influence over him, he would wreak a dreadful vengeance. Jean, of course, would never agree to being isolated from government, and therefore no agreement could be reached. The precariousness of Isabeau's situation soon became frighteningly clear. In April 1416, when a group of Burgundian-backed Parisians plotted the overthrow of the Armagnac government and the execution of the faction's princes and leaders, the queen was marked for elimination along with them.[12] The conspiracy was foiled only by the purest chance. Tanguy du Chastel gathered a group of men at arms, who surprised the conspirators and arrested them. The leaders of the plot were themselves executed shortly thereafter.

Isabeau fled Paris for Vincennes immediately after the misfired plot came to light on April 19. May 20 found her at the monastery of the Trinity of Vendôme in the diocese of Chartres, placing part of her treasure in the care of the monks.[13] In the case that she should fail to return to claim it someday, she instructed the monks that they could use it as they pleased as long as they said prayers for the souls of her husband and herself. The secret stockpiles she similarly entrusted to a series of churches eloquently witness her sense of danger from all sides. Spreading her treasure around for maximum security was a way of guaranteeing her continued existence and influence, as well as her ability to provide for her dependents. Isabeau's itinerary reveals that she returned to Paris for only a few days during the months of July and August but returned finally at the end of August.

Grandeau speculates that the failed uprising forced Isabeau to recognize that she could no longer hope to continue the strategy begun with Louis of

Guyenne. The dauphin Jean had failed to present himself as a leader, following his uncle's lead rather than seizing control of the situation, and, disillusioned by this lack initiative, the Parisians had taken matters into their own hands by plotting the uprising. Isabeau, according to Grandeau, realized that she could not achieve peace in the kingdom unless she collaborated with Jean sans Peur against the Armagnacs and crushed them.[14] The necessary effect of allying with Jean, of course, was the abandonment of her goal of creating a group attached to the dauphin, a group capable of superseding the two factions. William of Hainaut-Holland was simultaneously recognizing his own dependence on Jean sans Peur.[15] In September, he and the dauphin departed Le Quesnoy in Hainaut (in what is today southern Belgium) in preparation for the descent southward toward Paris. Although he had previously watched both factions warily, refusing to turn the dauphin over to either, he discovered that Jean had gone to Calais to meet Henry V on October 6. The prospect of an alliance between Henry V and the Duke of Burgundy was so unacceptable to William, whose territories lay between the two, that he determined to coax the duke away from the English. On November 12, he greeted Jean sans Peur in Valenciennes, where the next day, the two "jurèrent et promirent l'un à l'autre . . . en bonne et vraie fraternité, qu'ilz mectroient peine et conseil à avoir bon gouvernement ès personnes de Roy et du Daulphin, et que eux deux s'entretenroient et porteroient l'un et l'autre en leurs honneurs sans aucune division" (swore and promised each other in good and true brotherhood, that they would strive to govern the persons of the king and the dauphin, and they would care for and support each others' honor without dissension).[16] After Christmas, William and the dauphin returned to Le Quesnoy, requesting that Isabeau meet them there. Isabeau declined, undoubtedly nervous about leaving herself vulnerable in northern territory. Instead it was agreed that they would meet in Compiègne, about a hundred miles south of Quesnoy. The queen then proceeded to the chateau at Senlis, slightly over halfway from Paris to Compiègne, with her daughter Catherine, her son Charles, and some of the Royal Council.

The day of her arrival, she received a note from the dauphin, signalling his desire to negotiate with her alone in Compiègne.[17] Her position was difficult, for the Armagnacs were reluctant to accord her an important role in negotiations, fearing that she would cede too much to the Burgundians. Jean sans Peur, however, got around a potential impasse by sending the dauphin's wife, who was his niece, Jacqueline, and the girl's mother, Marguerite, who was his sister, to the queen at Senlis. The three negotiated intensely while a constant

flow of letters from the queen to the dauphin kept him informed of the progress.[18] At the same time, the Count of Brittany worked directly with the dauphin's representatives. But matters did not move as smoothly as Isabeau had hoped. For the Count of Armagnac, apprised of Isabeau's actions and hearing that Jean sans Peur was concluding an alliance in Lille with the Duke of Brittany's men, headed to Senlis himself.[19] Still, it seems that a date for the dauphin's return to Paris was decided by the time he arrived. Satisfied that this was imminent, Isabeau returned to Vincennes on February 21 to plan for the young man's entry into Paris.

The Count of Hainaut-Holland, however, seems to have concluded that Isabeau's influence with the Armagnacs was limited and, suspicious, decided to go to Paris himself to test the situation. When he arrived, he announced before the Royal Council that he would only permit the dauphin to enter Paris in the company of Jean sans Peur. If peace were not reached by the king and his Council, he would take the dauphin back to Hainaut. At this, the Council demanded that the king have the Count of Hainaut-Holland arrested. He managed to escape arrest by feigning a pilgrimage.[20]

Whatever the case, the problem of Jean sans Peur's involvement was obviated when disaster struck again on April 4, 1417. On that day the dauphin suddenly died in agony of an abscess in his ear. Once again, Isabeau's hopes of bringing an end to the feud were dashed. Only one son, Charles, remained, but he was married to Marie of Anjou, and, as we have seen, the Anjous were fierce Armagnacs. The faction was not going to leave the dauphin in the possession of his mother. On April 17, the Armagnacs arranged for a sweep of the queen's chateau at Vincennes on the pretext that her courtiers were leading dissolute lives, and they sent her to first to Blois, more than a hundred miles south of Paris, and then to Tours, where she was effectively imprisoned. Despite its flagrantly political motivation, this incident has long been held out as evidence of Isabeau's debauchery. Charles VII's biographer, Fresne de Beaucourt, for example, accepts uncritically the pretext sounded by the Armagnacs, claiming without substantiation that Isabeau's conduct had always been scandalous. And yet in the next sentence, astoundingly, he goes on to hypothesize as to the real reasons behind the queen's arrest: perhaps the Count of Armagnac had intercepted a message between her and the Duke of Burgundy; perhaps he was worried that she would pull the new dauphin under her influence; perhaps he wanted to seize her treasure.[21] Surely with such obvious political motivation, the exile does not require the additional explanation of debauchery. But Fresne de Beaucourt's analysis demonstrates

the effectiveness of propaganda on nineteenth-century historians. In contrast, contemporary chroniclers were less gullible. Monstrelet, for example, notes that the queen was watched over by three guardians appointed by the Armagnac government controlling her husband and son, who would not let her so much as write a letter. With the queen safely under lock and key, Monstrelet continues, the dauphin and the Armagnacs helped themselves to her hidden treasures.[22] Louise Fradenberg's assessment of the risks faced by queens, always marginal figures as they tried to hold factions together, illuminates the situation of Isabeau, trapped between the two factions whose conflict she had so long attempted to settle:

> When, on the basis of their foreignness, their femaleness, the in-betweenness of their regencies, or the ambiguous nature of their sovereignty, queens are constructed as what, in Turner's terms, we might call "liminal" figures—marginal to official institutions and practices of authority, though in various ways embedded within them, or made "symbolic" of them—the result is their particularly intense association with the concepts both of division and of unity. The symbolic capital of queenship is thus built upon the central role of queens in alliance-formation: queens embody the unity of nation or people or land, or they embody the forces that might tear that unity to pieces.[23]

For the queen, perpetual mediator possessing no army of her own, the only means of escape from imprisonment by the Armagnacs was to call on their rival Jean sans Peur. For his part, the Duke of Burgundy was quick to leap at the opportunity to appropriate for himself the authority that the queen lent his own cause. He delivered her from her house arrest on November 2.

The response was a royal ordinance promulgated by the Armagnac-controlled king in his Council on November 6, 1417, revoking the queen's right to deal with affairs during his "absences" and informing the subjects of the realm that Charles, the dauphin, would serve as regent as necessary.[24] Isabeau traveled with Jean sans Peur from Tours back north to Vendôme and on to Chartres, where they arrived on November 11.[25] From there she took action, transmitting letters to "plusieurs bonnes villes du royaume de France" in which she explained the situation at hand and justified her and the Duke of Burgundy's recent actions: the king was under the control of the Armagnacs and "d'aucunes gens de petit estat" (certain people of low degree).[26] The Armagnacs, she wrote, had conceived a mortal hatred toward the good and loyal of the kingdom and were freely confiscating their goods. More-

over, when she, the queen, had tried to reconcile the factions dividing the kingdom, a reconciliation that the king himself ardently desired during his lucid moments and that he had sought to ensure through his negotiations with Count William (whose death had followed the dauphin's by only a month), the Armagancs had separated the queen from the king, imprisoning her, to prevent her husband's learning the truth about their true motives. The dauphin countered on November 27, 1417, proclaiming that in fact the queen was a prisoner of Jean sans Peur.[27]

With Jean sans Peur, the queen proceeded to Troyes to form a government.[28] In a letter of January 10, 1418, she assumed her customary auxiliary position, granting regency powers to Jean.[29] But despite her clear alliance with the Duke of Burgundy, the queen soon resumed attempting to reconcile the factions. Unity was more necessary than ever with Henry V having effectively colonized France. The Count of Armagnac was unrelenting. However, other members of the faction recognized the folly of refusing to come to terms with the Burgundians, and, in the spring of that same year, peace suddenly appeared to be a possibility. Fresne de Beaucourt writes: "C'est ce que comprirent, avec un noble patriotisme, certains des conseillers de la Couronne qui, pendant que le connétable était en train de faire le siège de Senlis, où il avait emmené en grande pompe l'infortuné Charles VI, firent taire leurs antipathies et leurs rancunes pour préparer un rapprochement avec le duc." (That was understood by certain of the king's counselors, who, motivated by a noble patriotism, silenced their antipathies and rancor to prepare a reconciliation with the duke while the constable was besieging Senlis, where he had taken the unfortunate Charles VI in great pomp.)[30] An assembly in Paris convened on April 18, 1418, and arrived at a resolution on May 26, requiring just the signatures of the interested parties. The city erupted in joy as messengers started off to Troyes and Montbéliard to inform the queen and the Duke of Burgundy of the progress. Unfortunately, the Count of Armagnac continued to oppose the settlement.[31] When the dauphin called his Council together at the Louvre to approve the resolution, Bernard refused to participate. Undaunted, the dauphin approved the treaty despite the count's intransigence.[32]

When news of this internecine conflict leaked out, crowds manifested a strong displeasure (*vif mécontentement*).[33] The Burgundians took advantage of this tense atmosphere to seek their revenge for their years of exile after the Cabochian revolt and retake Paris. On May 29, they infiltrated the city, taking prisoner and later executing Bernard of Armagnac, assassinating other

Armagnac leaders and supporters, and routing sympathizers. The dauphin and his followers fled south to Bourges. Still, the Parisians continued to hope for a reconciliation: on June 8, *greffier* of the Parlement, Clément de Fauquembergue, reports that at a meeting of that body, two representatives were selected to approach the queen and the dauphin and beg them to unite the kingdom in peace.[34] In addition a group of bourgeois of Paris were sent to request that the queen and the Duke of Burgundy return to the city to restore and maintain the peace in the wake of the massacre.[35] The pair made a formal entry into the city on the July 14, where they were joyfully welcomed by a large group of Parisians.[36] They were led to the king, who greeted them affectionately. With the king and the queen reunited, Paul Bonenfant notes, moderate Burgundians and Armagnacs began at once to form a *parti du roi*.[37] On October 26, the dauphin responded by claiming the title of regent for himself.[38]

The initial enthusiasm with which the Parisians had greeted the queen and Jean sans Peur into Paris began to evaporate as Henry V pushed on through France, faith in the ability of the king and the Duke of Burgundy to stave off the English onslaught diminishing in the face of Henry's successes. In August the English retook Harfleur in northern France; Calais, Caen, Cherbourg, and Honfleur fell in close succession. Rouen, besieged in July 1418, fell on January 13, 1419. Fauquembergue describes the apprehension and danger of uprising that reigned in the capital while the residents watched anxiously as Rouen fell:

> Le prevost des marchans et autres pluiseurs de la ville de Paris et les lieutenans du prevost de Paris furent mandez par la Court pour apaisier et pourveoir aucuns murmures et sedicions que on doubtait à venir, et pour pourveoir à la paix et transquilité des habitans de Paris et au gouvernement et bonne police de la Ville, sur quoy pluiseurs assembléez et consultacions avaient esté faictes, qui avoient sorti petit effect. Et pour ceste mesme cause, se rassemblerent lendemain au Conseil, en la Chambre de Parlement, après disner.
> [The *prévôt* of the merchants and others of the city of Paris and the lieutenants of the *prévôt* of Paris were sent by the Court to appease and watch out for complaints and unrest that were feared to be coming, and to watch out for the peace and tranquility of the residents of Paris and for the government and police of the city, for which reason several assemblies had been called, from which issued little result. And for the

same reason, the next day the Council met after dinner in the Chamber of the Parlement.][39]

The queen and Jeans sans Peur met with Henry V in Meulan, thirty-one miles northwest of Paris, in June. The English king demanded the hand of Catherine of France in marriage, along with all of the territories won by the English with the 1360 Treaty of Brétigny. In addition, Henry claimed full sovereignty over Normandy. Nor did he agree to renounce his claim to the throne of France or rights over Anjou, Maine, the Touraine, Brittany, and Flanders.[40] The queen and the duke recoiled in the face of the exorbitant demands. But the Parisians were applying pressure for an accord, and, furthermore, the dauphin became more open to an agreement when he saw that the Burgundians were dealing with Henry V.[41] Temporarily rebuffing Henry, Jean met with the dauphin at Pouilly, just north of Melun, on July 8, 1419. Several days of tense negotiation between them followed. Pintoin recounts that on July 11, negotiations seemed on the verge of complete rupture after a bitter argument. But the day was saved when one of Isabeau's *dames d'honneur,* the Dame de Giac, intervened.[42] Sent by the queen, the Dame de Giac was dearly loved by the dauphin, whom she had known as a child. She was also well regarded by Jean sans Peur. She appears to have fulfilled her mediating role with great flourish. In tears, she supplicated the two to return to the table. An hour later they were appeased and reappeared amid cries of "Noël."[43] The result was that the dauphin promised to join Isabeau and Jean sans Peur to create a general peace that would be "ferme et estable entre les royaumes de France et d'Angleterre, et mesmement entre les subgiez de ce royaume" (firm and stable between the kingdoms of France and England, and also between the subjects of this kingdom [France]).[44] When the treaty had been sworn, the duke and dauphin exchanged gifts: for the dauphin was a golden *fermail,* a brooch, decorated with large diamonds, while Jean received a horse from the less wealthy dauphin.[45] Pintoin describes the joy with which the Parisians received news of the accord.[46]

The two men parted, then, with the understanding that they would meet again soon to agree on details, but they both believed that an accommodation had been reached. At least this is what Isabeau describes in a letter written later, on September 20, 1419, to Henry V.[47] That this generally was believed to be the dauphin's intention, or at least that the dauphin let it be known that such was his intention, is indicated by Fauquembergue, who writes that Jean sans Peur went to Montereau "en intencion d'entretenir les-

dis traictiez des alliances, paix et union dessusdis, et pour pourveoir de commun assentement au gouvernement, à la garde et conservacion de ce royaume, et pour ordonner officiers pour demener et conduire le fait de la guerre et aussi de la justice de ce royaume" (with the intention of discussing the said agreements of alliance, peace, and union and to bring about common assent to government, the guard and conservation of this kingdom, and to order officers to work and make war and also justice on behalf of this realm).[48] However, the dauphin seems to have misled his cousin as to his intentions. For when the two next met on the Montereau bridge on September 10, the dauphin's men brutally slew the Duke of Burgundy.

In retrospect, the dauphin's scheme seems clear. He repeatedly postponed the promised meeting; as Isabeau notes in the same letter to Henry V, the dauphin delayed again and again.[49] Paul Bonenfant doubts that the dauphin ever had any intention of actually joining forces with his relatives because to do so would have meant the end of his own regency. Even if the dauphin were sincere, concludes Bonenfant, his Armagnac counselors never would have permitted such an arrangement, for they would have continued to fear Jean sans Peur, given his long tradition of monopolizing power. Bonenfant speculates that the dauphin had decided to give in to public pressure to join the king, queen, and Duke of Burgundy by meeting with Jean sans Peur, but with the intention of murdering him: "Pourquoi ne pas . . . saisir l'occasion de cette entrevue pour se débarrasser enfin et à jamais de ce redoubtable rival, ce qui vengerait du même coup la mort du duc d'Orléans?" (Why not seize the opportunity to get rid of this powerful rival for good, avenging the death of the Duke of Orleans?)[50]

Isabeau reacted to the news of Jean's assassination with panic and dread. Nothing would prevent the dauphin and the Armagnacs from marching on Troyes and seizing her and the king. She appealed to Jean's widow, Marguerite, and his heir, Philip, the new Duke of Burgundy, to send troops to Troyes immediately. The chancery was busy night and day preparing letters to be sent out to the towns of the realm, requesting them to remain loyal to the king.[51]

The news of the Duke of Burgundy's assassination was received with equal distress in Paris. Fauquembergue describes reaction in the capital, deploring the inevitable difficulties that he knew would result from the dauphin's action:

> Duquel fait les habitans de la ville de Paris, qui tant avoient esté desirans et joyeux de la publicacion des aliances et traictiez de paix et union

dessusdis, esperans yceulz traictiez ainsi solempnelment passez, accordez et jurez, estre entretenus et observez, furent moult troublez de l'infraction desdictes pais, union, asseurances et aliances, et reprindrent, par commandement de justice, l'enseigne et crois de Saint Andry que pluiseurs avoient delaissié, soubz umbre et en Esperance du grant bien que on attendoit desz traictiez et aliances dessusdis. Dont, et pour occasion duquel fait, pluiseurs grans inconveniens et dommages irreparables sont disposez d'avenir, et ensuir plus grans que par avant, à la honte des faiseurs, ou dommage de mondit seigneur Dauphin principalement, qui attendoit le royaume par hoirrie et succession après le Roy, nostre souverain segneur, à quoy il aura mains d'aide et de faveur, et plus d'ennemis et adversaires que par avant.

[About which the residents of the city of Paris, who had been so thrilled at the publication of the aforementioned alliance and treaty of peace, expecting that the treaty, so solemnly approved and sworn, would be observed, were much troubled by the infraction of the said peace, union, assurance, and alliance, and took up, by order of justice, the ensign and cross of Saint André, which many had abandoned, under the shadow and in hope of the great good they were expecting from the treaty and alliance. Regarding this, many great troubles and irreparable hardships will be likely to occur, troubles greater than before, to the shame of the perpetrators and detriment of Monsieur the Dauphin especially, presumed heir to the kingdom, to succeed the king our sovereign lord, to whom there will now be less aid and favor and more enemies and adversaries than before.][52]

In vengeful fury, Parisians rounded up and executed partisans of the dauphin, according to Monstrelet.[53] The dauphin attempted to justify himself and arouse the Parisians to his side in letters sent to the capital, but these met with no positive response. Rather, captains, men at arms, *prévôts*, merchants, bourgeois, workers, and other inhabitants of Paris gathered together and swore their loyalty to the Count of St. Pol, earlier named lieutenant of Paris by Jean sans Peur, pledging to fight against the *malfaiteurs* responsible for the death of the duke.[54]

The Parisians feared that the Armagnacs would now team up with the English. As for Isabeau, now that her hopes of a joint Armagnac-Burgundian army to defeat the English were extinguished, she too feared becoming the victim of an alliance, but one between Henry V and the new Duke of Bur-

gundy, Philip. At least this appears to be the case, judging by her attempt to take up negotiations with the English king. In the letter of September 20 mentioned above (a copy of which she forwarded to Philip, presumably to signal to him that she had taken control of the situation), she requests that Henry send an embassy of about forty to Troyes to meet with Charles VI and herself, as well as "ceulx de son sang et lignaige, et aultres grans et loyaulx barons et notables gens de cest royamme" (those of his blood and lineage, and other great and loyal barons and notable people of this kingdom).[55] However, Isabeau was not granted her meeting, for Henry was being solicited at the same time by the Parisians, who for their part had decided that the only way to prevent an alliance between the Armagnacs and the English was to negotiate with the King of England. An embassy departed Paris on September 19 to seek an audience with Henry at Gisors in Normandy, reaching the castle just as Isabeau's letter arrived by messenger.

At Gisors the group was stunned to learn that Henry was demanding nothing less than the crown for himself in return for an alliance.[56] The embassy returned to Paris, accompanied by a group sent by the English king, to discuss the matter further. In Paris, the Count of St. Pol and the Royal Council expressed their shock at the demand, reminding the English embassy of the earlier negotiations between the king and the Duke of Burgundy, "duquel traitié ilz se devoient bien contenter" (which treaty should be satisfactory to them).[57] The response of the English was curt: things had changed: "les choses estoient autres, et en autre dispocision" (things were different, and differently disposed).[58]

Jean sans Peur was buried on October 22 at the cathedral of St. Vaast in Arras, while the new Duke of Burgundy for his part circulated in his territories, making entries and gathering the support of his followers for the struggles to come. At this point, Philip was still unaware of the demands that Henry V was making. When he learned of these from messengers shortly after his father's funeral, he held a council to discuss the pros and cons of joining forces with the English king under the outrageous terms set out.[59] It was decided that an alliance with the English was the lesser of two evils. Bonenfant writes: "Enfin ne valait-il pas mieux, puisque le duc ne pouvait s'assurer la couronne après la mort de Charles VI, la voir passer au roi d'Angleterre plutôt qu'au dauphin ou aux Orléans? Cette considération seule devrait suffire à le déterminer sans retard." (In the end wasn't it better, given that the duke could not control the crown after the death of Charles VI, to see it pass to the King of England rather than to the dauphin or to the House

of Orleans? This alone would have sufficed to determine the answer without hesitation.)[60]

Philip had made his choice: it remained to convince Isabeau, who because Henry had not sent her the requested embassy, was still unaware of that king's condition that he assume the crown of France. As far as Isabeau knew, Henry's condition for alliance was still the cession of the lands originally ceded to England by the Treaty of Brétigny, as he had demanded the previous May.[61] When Philip made the demands of Henry V known to the queen by messenger, she balked, showing herself to be significantly less malleable than Philip had hoped she would be.

As Bonenfant observes, it has always been assumed that the queen acceded easily to the agreement at this point. But the historian demonstrates that this was not the case. Unfortunately, despite his careful reading and interpretation of the documents, his analysis has been ignored in the rare discussions of the queen's attitude toward the Treaty of Troyes. However, these arguments are crucial to reconstructing the story of Isabeau's actions leading up to the Treaty of Troyes. I review them in what follows.

Isabeau initially resisted Henry's demand. A letter patent of November 7, which she issued in the name of the king, bears witness to her opposition. On the one hand, the letter patent grants Philip the power to conclude a general truce with the English: "Trieues & Abstinence de Guerre, bonnes & Seures, generales ou particuliers" (truces and cessation of war, good and secure, general or limited).[62] On the other hand, it does not grant him the power to conclude peace. Obviously this limited authority threatened to stall negotiations with the English.

Still, the Burgundians devised a way out by stipulating in the accord that they signed with English ambassadors in Arras on November 30 that the absence of the king's consent would not *necessarily* render the accord invalid.[63] Two days later, Philip added his approval and swore to persuade the king and queen to accept the accord.[64] It is important to emphasize that Philip was well aware that the queen's assent would not be won easily: indeed, that he feared she might try to escape from Troyes when she discovered that he was prepared to yield the concessions demanded by Henry. This is clear from Philip's instructions to his man Jean de Blaisy, whom the duke sent to Troyes to speak to his mother, Duchess Marguerite, and to bring the queen up to date. In a letter dated early December 1419, Philip insists that Jean de Blaisy impress on Marguerite the importance of keeping the king, the queen, and the princess Catherine surrounded by "good and faithful people," in other

words, reliable Burgundians ("qu'elle face bonne diligence que le roy, la royne et Madame Katherine soient seurement et de bonnes et fiables gens accompaignées").[65] Why would the royal family need to be securely accompanied by loyal Burgundians if Philip were not afraid that they would try to take flight? After the murder of Jean sans Peur, Marguerite, planning to go to Troyes herself, had called up men-at-arms to accompany her to Troyes, undoubtedly to guarantee that the queen remain in place, although the duchess fell sick and was not able to make the trip as planned.[66]

Far from the assent that Philip hoped for, on December 17 Isabeau sent Philip's man Regnier Pot to deliver to the duke the noncommittal response that she was ready to negotiate for the honor of the king, her lord and husband ("a l'onneur du roy, son seigneur et espoux").[67] In addition, she tried to buy time by requesting that some properties and goods be returned to her. For at that precise moment, she had entered into contact once again with the dauphin. On December 21, the dauphin responded to a no-longer extant letter from her, explaining that he had dispatched a messenger to her who would speak to her about the secret matters she had touched on in an earlier message to him.[68] A letter from the dauphin's chancellor, Robert de Maçon, to that same Regnier Pot, confirms that an agreement between the dauphin and his mother was under way. Charles had called on Regnier Pot to deliver a message to Philip on October 15, in which he reproached the duke for negotiating with the English. Regnier Pot, then, was in the thick of the intrigue. In his letter, Robert de Maçon thanks Regnier for all he had done to advance the cause of peace.[69] Bonenfant remarks, "N'est-il pas symptomatique dès lors que ce soit lui que la reine ait chargé le 17 décembre de porter au duc de Bourgogne une réponse que l'on a toutes les raisons de qualifier de dilatoire?" (Is it not symptomatic from that time on that he happened to be the one that the queen charged with carrying to the Duke of Burgundy on December 17 a response [i.e., Isabeau's request for the restitution of certain lands and funds] that can only be qualified as a delaying tactic?)[70] Isabeau, then, was clearly waffling on settlement with Philip of Burgundy and Henry V while attempting to negotiate an agreement with her son.

What happened? Why was the agreement not realized? It is impossible to know exactly what transpired between the date when Isabeau tried that one last time to reach an accord with her son and January 17, when the king and his Council released letters patent announcing the king's condemnation of the dauphin.[71] A number of factors may have played a role in Isabeau's de-

cision to abandon the dauphin's cause. One may have been that she was intimidated into her final capitulation to the Burgundians. Although she was able to slip messages to the outside world, she was surrounded in Troyes by "loyal" Burgundians, which must have been a source of considerable pressure. This issue is raised by the anonymous writer of the *Répons d'un bon et loyal François,* composed in the winter of 1420 in reaction to the December accord between Philip and Henry V at Arras:

> Considerez en quelle liberté et franchise ont esté et sont la royne et sa fille, madame Katherine, qui se sont voulu partir de Troyes, la ou elles estoient comme l'en dit, mais on ne l'a pas souffert jusques a tant que on les ait mises es mains des anciens ennemis du roy et du royaume et d'elles mesmes, par espoventement et force de gens d'armes.
> [Considering whether the queen and her daughter, Madame Catherine, have been or are free; they wanted to leave Troyes, where they were, as they say, but this was not permitted; they were delivered into the hands of the ancient enemies of the king and the kingdom and of themselves, by terror and the force of men at arms.][72]

The claim has been dismissed as Armagnac propaganda or wishful thinking or perhaps as an offer of a way out for Isabeau. Nicole Pons writes of the queen that at the time the *Répons* was composed, "she had totally cast her lot on the side of Henry V and Philip of the Good."[73] True, Isabeau had made her choice. But the point that she had been forced into it cannot be dismissed given the very real presence of the duke's supporters.

At the very least, the "loyal" Burgundians would have formed a layer between Isabeau and alternate sources of information about what was happening beyond Troyes. Thus she would not have been able to discern what was true and what was being said to persuade her to comply. Once again, the *Répons* makes this point, albeit in an exaggerated way.

> Considerez la premiere malice, car ce traictiés ilz ont fait et formé en latin contre le commun usaige des tracitiez qui souloient estre faiz entre François et Anglois; et ce ont fait afin que plus legierement et couvertement puissent estre induiz ceulx qui n'entendront (point le) latin a l'accorder, comme le roy, la royne, madame Katherine et la plus grant partie des nobles, bourgeois et autres du royaume, et car le latin puet avoir plus divers entendemens par equivocation que le François.
> [Considering the first trick, they wrote and formulated the treaty in

> Latin, against the common usage of treaties between the French and the English; and they did this because those who do not understand Latin can be more easily and covertly persuaded, like the king, the queen, and Madame Catherine and the greatest part of the nobles, bourgeois, and others of the kingdom, for Latin is more susceptible to equivocation than French.][74]

The accusation cannot be wholly true. Still, like the argument that she was being held prisoner, it may be understood as revealing a partial truth: that Isabeau was being misinformed. We know that the Duke of Burgundy fed her stories. For example, in October he had instructed Jean de Blaisy to emphasize that the Armagnacs were negotiating diligently with the English, "ou grant prejudice du roy et de ses obeïssans" (to the great detriment of the king and his followers).[75] This was almost certainly not true.[76] The incident demonstrates that Isabeau was given information about her son that may not have been accurate. Surrounded by Burgundians determined to persuade her to come to their side and lacking the details necessary to decide whom to trust, Isabeau would have been unable to make an informed decision. She would have had no good reason to trust Charles and his followers: against their own interest and that of the kingdom, they had slain the Duke of Burgundy. It may have been relatively simple for a messenger of Henry V to convince the queen of her son's treacherous intents regarding her.

In any case, the one-man embassy of Louis Robersart seems to have been the decisive factor in Isabeau's decision to abandon her son's cause and revert once and for all to that of the Burgundians. Bonenfant points out how odd it is that Henry V would send an individual to the court of Troyes in an age when embassies commonly numbered about half a dozen.[77] The secrecy surrounding the mission—little is known about the man and nothing about his message—indicates that Henry V did not regard this as an ordinary diplomatic visit. Clearly the king chose Louis Robersart carefully: he was a man calculated to appeal to all parties involved in the negotiations, trusted on all sides. As Bonenfant writes, he was a native of Hainaut and his first language was French; he was related to the House of Bavaria, belonging to the same branch of Wittelsbach as the Duchess of Burgundy; and having served the king of England for twenty-five years, he possessed English citizenship.

The queen, surrounded by loyal Burgundians, appears to have yielded to Robersart's recommendations. Not only was she surrounded by Philip's men,

but even her own counselors were bribed by the Duchess of Burgundy, writes Bonenfant, who "distribue largement à ceux-ci, non point des pots, mais des queues de vins, 'afin qu'ilz soient plus enclinz es affaires' du duc" (distributed lavishly to them, not jars but "queues" [280 pint measures] of wine, "so that they would be more inclined toward the affairs" of the duke).[78]

Furthermore, there was the question of money. Isabeau had virtually no funds remaining. A long tradition reproaches the queen for her desire to provide for herself and her household. Even Bonenfant writes in this regard that "il eût fallu à Isabeau un désintéressement et une force d'âme qu'elle ne possédait certainement pas pour repousser, en de telles circonstances, la tentation d'un secours financier bourguignon" (Isabeau would have required a disinterest and force of spirit that she certainly did not possess to reject under the circumstances the temptation of financial aid from the Burgundians).[79] After ceding to Robersart, Isabeau was paid 6,000 livres on March 3. But to see the queen's desire to provide for her dependents as signs of greed and collaboration is to ignore the fact that she was responsible for a household, a group of followers, whose very existence depended on her. She did not have the luxury of worrying simply about feeding herself. It is more accurate to see the queen's decision as one in favor of her dependents and against a son whose followers had imprisoned her, a son who was as likely as not to turn on her if she managed to escape from Troyes.

The Treaty of Troyes, finally signed on May 20, 1420, was not viewed as a disaster by everyone. Many Parisians were very happy to receive the news. Fauquembergue relates that on Monday, April 30, an assembly including the Count of St. Pol, the chancellor, the presidents and the councillors of the three chambers of Parlement, representatives of the University of Paris, the *prévôt* of Paris, clerks, people of the church, bourgeois and inhabitants of Paris "en grant nombre, tant que ladicte Chambre de Parlement en estoit toute plaine et occupée" (in large number, such that the said Parlement was totally filled and occupied) gathered in the Parlement.[80] They were informed that after laboring over the question of peace and accord between the two kingdoms of France and England, the Duke of Burgundy, acting for the king and queen and the Royal Council at Troyes, had brokered peace in the form of a treaty:

> lequel traictié et accord le duc de Bourgoigne avoit esté esmeu de poursuir, non mie pour occasion d'aucune vengence contre quelconques personne, mais seulement pour obtemperer, obeir et ensuir le commande-

ment, advis et consentement dessusdis, et pour remedier et obvier aux tres grant perilz, dommages et inconveniens qui estoient avenuz et qui estoient disposez d'avenir, pour occasion de la guerre d'entre lesdis deux royaumes, et pour eviter plus grant efusion de sang humain, et aussi pour relever le peuple et subgiez de ce royaume des griefs et oppressions qu'ilz ont souffert et soubstenu par cy devant et soubstiennent de jour en jour, et pour yceulz gouverner et maintenir en bonne justice, paix et transquilité par le Roy, ses gens, conseilliers et officiers, et pour autres causes necessaires pour la conservacion du Roy et de sa segnorie. Et, pour eviter la desolacion et destruction de son royaume, de la chose publique d'icellui et de ses vrais et loyaulz subgiés.

[which treaty and accord the Duke of Burgundy had been moved to pursue, not at all for vengeance against certain people, but simply to adhere to and obey the commands, opinions, and consent above-mentioned, and to remedy and avoid great peril, damage, and problems that had happened and that would occur in the future, in the event of war between the two kingdoms, and to avoid a greater effusion of blood, and also to relieve the people and the subjects of the realm of the grief and oppression that they had suffered before and sustained daily, and govern them and maintain justice, peace and tranquillity for the king, his people, counselors and officers, and for other things necessary for the conservation of the king and his kingdom. And, to avoid the desolation and destruction of the kingdom, of its common good and that of his true and loyal subjects.][81]

The group responded enthusiastically, demonstrating their approval: they "respondirent in truba que oyl par les bouches de pluiseurs en très grant nombre" (responded vocally, in large number, their assent with their mouths).[82]

That Isabeau disinherited her son as a bastard in the Treaty of Troyes came to be believed only after her death. The idea is based upon a mistranslation of a common expression used in the treaty, "so-called" (*soi-disant*), as I noted in the introduction. Later historians, already believing in Isabeau's promiscuity, read *soi-disant* as a veiled reference to Charles's uncertain paternity. But, as we saw, the interpretation cannot be justified, for the term was part of standard insult vocabulary, meaning that the bearer of a title was unfit.

The Problem of Patriotism

For nineteenth- and early twentieth-century historians, the dauphin was the center around which French patriotism took its form; for them, supporting the dauphin against the Burgundians was an act of patriotism, and the queen's attempt to block her son's accession to the throne an act of treason. Calmette and Déprez exemplify this perspective:

> autour du "dauphin," décrié et contesté, se cristallise le loyalisme. Une voix s'élève, celle d'une opposition qu'on peut bien dire nationale. C'est la protestation de ceux qui se haussent à cette vue, incontestablement patriotique, qu'en aucun cas et sous aucun prétexte il n'est licite de favoriser l'étranger contre le pays, qu'en face d'un impérialisme déchainé il faut taire les passions partisanes, imposer silence aux préférences individuelles, sacrifier délibérément les intérêts particuliers et brider les égoïsmes, même collectifs.
> [around the dauphin, decried and contested, loyalty crystallized. A voice was raised, that of an opposition that we can call national. The protestation issuing from this voice that was indisputably patriotic held that under no circumstances was it licit to favor the foreigner against the country, and that in the face of unbridled imperialism it was necessary to halt partisan sentiments, silence individual preferences, deliberately sacrifice particular interests, and rein in self-interest, even collective.][83]

The reading of Calmette and Déprez presents a number of problems. First, it ignores the purely aleatory nature of the dauphin's allegiance to the Armaganc rather than Burgundian faction. If a national voice can be discerned rising out of the *mêlé,* it is only because in retrospect events have been assembled purposefully into an interpretational grid that locates the origins of patriotism in the voices supporting the dauphin. Originally scheduled to marry Jean of Burgundy's daughter, Anne, the dauphin eventually married Marie of Anjou.[84] Had he been the son-in-law of the Duke of Burgundy, the history of France would have been different. The Armagnacs would have had little justification to continue their struggle had Charles been embedded in the Burgundian cause, and the double monarchy of Henry V would have been impossible. To further emphasize the contingency of the dauphin's position, even the Angevin attachment to the Armagnac cause was never a given but occurred as a result of the personal enmity between Louis II, Duke of Anjou, and his cousin Jean sans Peur for reasons to be explained below.

After the Cabochian revolt, Louis assumed that the Armagancs were likely to remain in power and decided that they therefore represented the better risk.[85] The notion of the dauphin as a focal point for patriotism must thus be significantly nuanced. It was not clear to those on the ground in around 1420 that Charles would become a rallying point around which patriotism would develop. From a contemporary perspective, the dauphin had inherited a feud: in fact, it was precisely the dauphin who refused to "taire les passions partisanes" (halt the partisan sentiments), the dauphin who finally rejected Jean sans Peur's attempts to reconcile the factions in the face of the English juggernaut in the strongest language possible, by slaying the leader of one faction and a blood relative on top of that.

Loyalty to the Armagnacs cannot be understood, then, uncritically, as a form of nationalism or patriotism. Arguments that the king could not legally disinherit his son, promoted from 1417 on, represented the position of a significant population. Still, the passionate mutual hatred expressed by supporters of the factions did not derive from political ideology but followed the logic of a feud. A variety of different interests were latched on to one or the other of the factions for reasons of kinship and local interests. That the struggle as Isabeau experienced it was waged as a feud between warring factions is supported by an examination of what motivated the different houses to join forces with one or the other of the two parties. The most obvious reason was close familial ties. The dauphin's closest followers were from Angevin families. Pierre, seigneur de Beauvau, erstwhile counselor of Charles's father-in-law, Louis II, Duke of Anjou and seneschal of Anjou and governor of Provence, was assigned to Charles by his mother-in-law, Yolande of Anjou.[86] The *grand maître* of Charles's household, Hardouin, seigneur de Maillé, had begun his career serving the House of Anjou.[87] Robert de Maçon, Charles's chancellor, was the son of a secretary and counselor of Louis II of Anjou.[88] Jean Louvet, *président* of Provence, part of the Angevin holdings, married his daughter to the Bastard of Orleans, Jean of Dunois, natural son of Louis of Orleans. Tanguy du Chastel, close advisor and one of the principal instigators of the assassination of Jean sans Peur, had accompanied Louis II of Anjou in his Italian campaigns and later served as the *prévôt* of Paris under the Armagnacs. The loyalty of these followers was assured through the careful and efficient dispensing of favor; as Malcolm Vale writes, they were men of relatively low standing, dependent on Charles's patronage for their prestige, for Agincourt had deprived the kingdom of a large portion of its nobility, potential allies of the dauphin. "Such men," writes

Vale, "could be trusted as long as they were rewarded."[89] Among the nobility, the Dukes of Bar, Savoy, and the Duchess of Bourbon all clung to the Angevin, that is to say, the Armagnac cause, for reasons of kinship.[90] These alliances were not based on a sense of patriotism, loyalty to France, but on family interest.

On the Burgundian side, too, followers were motivated by family interest rather than ideological commitment. Marguerite of Burgundy solicited Pope Martin V to declare that the dauphin perjured the oath he swore at Pouilly. But the Pope declined, mindful that his own candidate for the kingship of Naples was the son of Yolande of Anjou. Even the Pope thought first of kinship. The Burgundians had also depended on the support of the Duke of Lorraine. However, his daughter, Isabelle, was about to marry René, another son of Yolande, which pulled him from the Burgundian camp.

Further reinforcing the idea that the dauphin's cause should be viewed in the context of feuding rather than patriotism is that the dauphin himself couched his claims to be the injured party in terms of a feud. Calling on the cities for their support, he requested aid for the *seigneurie* of his father, which was being damaged by rebels. His appeal was never cast in terms of patriotism; it was never a call to rise up and defend the *patrie:*

> Attendu que mondit seigneur est de present et par ladicte traison ès mains des dessusdiz ses rebelles et desobeissans et destruiseurs de ceste seigneurie, et à nous, qui sommez son seul filz, tant par vertu du pouvoir de lieutenant general que il nous a donné comme par droit naturel, appartient plus que à nul aultre pourveoir à la bonne garde et entretenement de sa seigneurie, à laquelle chose faire chescun doit avoir à nous recours et nous y faire ayde et preste obeissance.
> [Given that Monseigneur is at the moment, because of the said treason, in the hands of the above-mentioned rebellious and disobedient subjects, destroyers of his *seigneurie,* it is up to us, his only son, as much by virtue of the power of lieutenant general he has vested in me as by natural right, more than to anyone else to watch out for the guard and care of his *seigneurie,* and for this, everyone should have recourse to us and give us aid and obedience.][91]

Historians frequently refer to the Armagnacs as the "French," in opposition to the Burgundians. The effect of the binary is to reinforce the impression that the feud can be viewed from a patriotic perspective, with the Armagnacs representing the beleaguered nation. However, this is not accu-

rate. Northern chroniclers refer to the Armagnacs as foreigners, in contrast with themselves, pointing to their bizarre language and birthplace in distant lands.[92] The kingdom was divided between the factions; the "French" could be either Armagnacs or Burgundians. Indeed, individual cities within the French kingdom were divided. The behavior of members of the Burgundian faction within cities won back from the Armagnacs in 1417 as described by Juvénal des Ursins demonstrates that to the villagers torn between loyalties, the conflict was not attached to patriotic principles. On the contrary, the popular outrage that erupted into violence against the Armagnac *officiers* of the king suggests the dispute was experienced as local in nature.

> Partout on prenoit les gens du Roy, qui au temps estoyaient officiers, et leur cuppoit-on les testes, et pilloit, et robboit-on leurs biens. Et pour faire tuer un homme, il suffisoit de dire "Cestuy là est Armagnac." Aussi pareillement quand on pouvoit scavoir ou trouver quelques un qu'on scavoit tenir le party du duc de Bourgogne, ils estoient punis, et leurs biens pris: c'estoit grande pitié à gens d'entendement, de voir les choses en estat qu'elles estoient.
> [Everywhere they snatched the king's people, who at that time were officers, and they chopped off their heads, pillaged them, and robbed them of their goods. To get someone killed it sufficed to say "That one is an Armagnac." Also, if someone found out that someone else belonged to the party of the Duke of Burgundy, they were penalized, and their goods taken: it was a great pity to people of sense to see things in such a state.][93]

This outrage followed from the harsh rule and destruction attributed to the Armagnacs, who themselves feared and despised the Burgundians. The Armagnac faction had been thoroughly discredited by its ruthless suppression of the Parisians when it gained power after the Cabochian revolt.[94] Isabeau, then, had good reason to continue to see the struggle in the same terms in which it had always been cast since the early days when she was first appointed mediator. Ever attempting to chart a path between the Scylla of the Armagnacs and the Charybdis of the Burgundians, she had allied herself with the Armagnacs after the Cabochian uprising. But finding herself trapped in a feud she could not contain, she labored to transcend the factions. The goal proved to be illusory.

Undoubtedly signs of a budding patriotism were apparent in the fifteenth century. But they were just that: signs. As Etienne Balibar signals, foundation myths are illusory and frequently retrospective. The development of a na-

tion is never inevitable; it is only afterward that we imagine a trajectory with a clear teleology. National formation, rather, first "consists of a multiplicity of qualitatively distinct events spread out over time, none of which implies any subsequent event. Second, these events do not of their nature belong to the history of one determinate nation."[95] As David A. Bell argues, national sentiment was aroused by the Hundred Years War, but this was different from "nationalism" in ways pertinent to this discussion of Isabeau's role in the Treaty of Troyes.[96] The medieval notions of the nation were based on an awareness of a shared history and geography, but mostly on shared subjugation to the French king. "Nationalism" emerges from the willed construction of a collective identity, a nation, and such nationalism is located above any individual leader. The national sentiment of the fifteenth century was attached to a figure, the king, not to a nation.

To assess Isabeau's role in the Treaty of Troyes, the Burgundian-Armagnac conflict must be detached from its familiar position within the narrative of a national struggle against the English and reconsidered in terms that would have been familiar to the queen and her contemporaries. Marie-Luise Heckmann argues that this would have been the language of dynasty. As we have seen, the notion of female complementarity, a view that Isabeau clearly shared with her contemporaries, eased the eventual adoption of Salic Law. However, Salic Law had not yet been firmly established in 1420. Nor had it been settled definitively whether the king had the right to determine his heir or whether the heir succeeded simply by "natural" right. Ralph Giesey has demonstrated the hazardous nature of the principles of French succession, writing that the apparently fundamental law must be seen as "a congeries of different ideas coming from the different legal systems of medieval times."[97] When the king disinherited the dauphin in 1419 for having Jean sans Peur assassinated, it was not clear whether or not he had the right to do so. Jean de Terre Rouge's treatise in favor of the dauphin would help decide the issue, but this came after the king had already acted, and, moreover, the treatise did not receive wide distribution until a century after it was written.[98] Heckmann argues that from Isabeau's perspective, her daughter Catherine could reasonably form the family link to the throne if the dauphin Charles were refused succession:

> Isabella von Bayern dachte und handelte vor allem nach dynastichen Kategorien. Das gilt auch für den Übergang der französichen Krone an den englischen Prätendenten im Mai 1420. Für die Königin war es

ebenso vorstellbar, dass ihre Tochter die französische Krone weitergeben könnte, wie dass ihre Sohn das tat.
[Isabeau of Bavaria thought and behaved in accordance with dynastic categories. This was the case for the transfer of the French crown to the English claimant in May 1420. For the queen was it equally imaginable that her daughter would pass on the French crown as that her son would do so.][99]

When Salic Law, with its exclusion of women from succession and its claim that the king did not possess the right to disinherit his eldest son, became a "fundamental" law of the land, it retrospectively invalidated Isabeau's assumptions. But in 1420, the question of succession was still moot. From Isabeau's perspective, then, the Treaty of Troyes must have looked like a plausible means of bringing an end to the conflict between the Burgundians and Armagnacs by joining the Burgundian cause to the superior power of Henry V, who would be able to force the dauphin's faction to submit. In fact, the treaty did not succeed at this goal. However, in 1420, the actors could not "take into account some five centuries of subsequent historical development," as Mark Warner has observed.[100]

It is reasonable, then, to consider the ostensible advantages the treaty appeared to offer in 1420. One feature of the double monarchy that has not been sufficiently considered, as J. W. McKenna argued already in 1965, is that once the reign of Henry V had passed, a French king would sit on the throne of France. The French had resisted vigorously an English king on the throne since Edward III first pressed his claim in 1338. But Henry V's son, Henry VI, son of Catherine de Valois, was half French, a normal status of the heir to the throne, whose mother was frequently from a different land. Charles VII, of course, was French, but his mother was Bavarian. A program of propagandistic genealogical trees was created to support the image of Henry VI as French. In fact, the claim did not take hold in the popular imagination; no one today thinks of Henry VI as French. But at the time there was no reason not to believe that such would be the case. The hope that Henry VI would be perceived as a French king was all the more reasonable in 1420 when Henry V's premature death in 1422 was not foreseeable. Jean Chartier, who continued the chronicle of Pintoin after the monk's death, writes almost positively of the recently deceased Henry, suggesting that he might have succeeded at his goal of reigning over a peaceful kingdom had he survived to old age:

> Nec suo tempore ullus princeps eo sufficiencior, quo ad patriam subigendam et conquirendam, racione policie, prudencie et justicie aliarumque proprietatum in eo existencium videbatur, quamvis divisiones et dissipaciones inter regni Francie principes ad subiciendam patriam quam subjecit ipsum permaxime adjuvarent, quoniam *Omne regnum in se divisum,* etc. Firme enim sperabat, ut ante dictum est, liliorum corone sublimari et regno Francie jure hereditario racionibus superius dictis, quamvis minus racionabiliter, succedere.
>
> [There was no prince in his time who was more capable of subjugating and conquering the land, through the reasonableness of his politics, prudence, justice, and other qualities that he clearly possessed, although the divisions and problems among the princes of France greatly aided the subjection that he planned: as it is said, *Omne regnum in se divisum,* etc. He firmly hoped, as we have said, to succeed to the crown of *fleur-de-lis* and the kingdom of France as legal heir, for the reasons stated above, although this was unreasonable.][101]

Henry's success in uniting the kingdom, had he survived, is not a given, or even highly probable, in the face of the tenacity of Charles and his followers. Yet, he might have appeared likely to succeed, not unreasonably, to Isabeau. Had Henry V lived to old age or had a mentally stable Henry VI ascended the throne, either one might well have been accepted as a French king.

Another aspect of the double monarchy created by the Treaty of Troyes that must be considered in judging Isabeau's role in it is that its chances of creating and maintaining peace would have been greater had Philip of Burgundy become regent after the death of Henry V. Instead, the late king's brother, John, Duke of Bedford, immediately assumed the reins of power, even though Henry V appears to have designated Philip regent.[102] The too-great popularity of the Dukes of Burgundy had always been a problem as far as the royal family was concerned: but in this case it would have worked to their advantage, helping to arouse support for the baby king, Henry VI.

The treaty did not produce the results that Isabeau had hoped. But had she rejected the English king's offer, the seemingly endless Armagnac-Burgundian feud would have continued in the same way. True, Henry V's early death might have resulted in an earlier peace had the treaty not existed, but she could not have foreseen that. Nor would Henry V have received the moral authority he presumably enjoyed because of the support of the king and queen. Nonetheless, he would have continued his conquest of France as long as he lived.

Wife, Mother, Friend

Boneur, bon temps, trés agreeable année,
Vray reconfort de ce que plus vous blece,
Plaisir, soulas, vous doint ceste journée
Et les autres plus en plus vous eslece,
Toudis accroisse et garde vo haultece,
Vostre valeur et vo trés noble faame,
Et vous envoit joye qui ja ne cesse,
Ce jour de l'an, ma redoubtée dame.
[May this day give you good fortune, good times, a very happy year, true comfort for that which most hurts you, pleasure, solace, and may many more make you happy; may your excellence, value and fame grow and remain every day, and may this New Year's day bring you joy without cease, my great lady.]

Historians of the past have waged personal attacks against the queen: that she was scheming, promiscuous, greedy, neglectful of her children, hungry for power, lacking in intelligence. She has been treated as an allegorical figure of *luxuria,* fleshly and obese. While no one can offer substantive information about the character of a woman who lived over six hundred years ago, I hope in this final chapter to at least mitigate some of these negative impressions by offering alternatives to counter them. Approaching the evidence without the negative assumptions that so often exist about the queen, I reconsider contemporary traces of her to ask what sort of person these traces might reveal.

Wife

Many of the old myths about the relationship between Isabeau and Charles have already been rebutted: that she led him into a life of extravagant feasting and cavorting, that she kept him impoverished after his insanity set in,

that she betrayed him with different lovers.[1] But will the records permit anything more than the denial of certain elements of the black legend for lack of evidence? In fact, I believe that we can define the relationship that emerges from the documents fairly precisely: it is one of dependence. A disabled king relies upon his trusted wife to manage everything that he is incapable of tending to himself. Charles sought the queen's advice when he was sane and counted on her to maintain the kingdom when he was "absent." The clearest sign of this dependence is the series of royal ordinances authorizing her to act in his stead. But an occasional glimpse of the queen issuing from the odd observer confirms this impression. A letter of 1409 to the King of Aragon from Pons de Perellos, Spanish counselor of the Duke of Burgundy, suggests the king's trust in his wife: "the king does nothing except what the queen and the councillors advise."[2]

We can go further, I believe, and locate the roots of the king's confidence in his wife in the close relationship he shared with her before his first episode of insanity. Traces of Isabeau and Charles VI in some of the chronicles suggest that their attachment was intense. The queen enters written history as a demure fourteen-year-old in 1385 with Froissart's chronicle, bowing before the king in the palace of the archbishop of Amiens. Motionless, writes Froissart, she "ne mouvait oel, ni bouce" (she moved neither eye nor mouth), in perfect conformity with the ideal of modest behavior for girls.[3] Froissart describes the meeting of the two in Amiens, claiming that Isabeau was so lovely that the seventeen-year-old King Charles VI fell in love with her at first sight:

> Le venredy, quant le jone dame fu parée et ordonnée enssi comme à li appertenoit, les trois ducoises l'amenèrent devers le roy. Quant elle fu devant le roy, elle s'engenilla tout bas, li rois vint vers ly, et le prist par le main, et le fist lever et le regarda de grant manière. En che regart, plaisance et amour li entrèrent ou coer, car il le vey belle et jone, et si avoit grant désir dou veoir et de l'avoir.
> [Friday, when the young lady had been bedecked and outfitted as befitted her, the three duchesses led her toward the king. When she was before the king, she knelt low; the king came toward her, raised her, and gazed at her. As he gazed, happiness and love entered his heart, for he saw that she was beautiful and young, and thus he greatly desired to gaze at her and possess her.][4]

Several representations of Isabeau remain to attest to her pretty bone structure.[5] Her statue, accompanied by those of Charles VI, Jean of Berry,

and Jean's second wife, Jeanne of Boulogne, adorns the Palais de Justice in Poitier. The facial features of this statue, those represented in the famous miniature of folio 3 recto of Harley 4431 showing Christine de Pizan dedicating that same manuscript to the queen, and those of the queen's marble *gisant* at Saint Denis, executed between 1425 and 1429, are clearly recognizable as belonging to the same woman. Her face was delicate with a slightly pointed nose and a dimpled chin. Her coloring may have been dark, for the "Songe véritable" describes her as *envelopée en laide peau,* probably a reference to the olive cast of her skin in an age when the ideal of feminine beauty prescribed white skin. The *Pastoralet,* composed during her lifetime, refers to her as *brunette*.[6]

As for her size, she may also have been small, for the same work, in the same line, calls her *basse*. A notion persists that the queen was short and obese. Nineteenth-century medical historian Auguste Brachet propounds that she suffered from an "anomalie de proportions, la malformation anatomique des membres inférieurs" (anomaly of proportions, the anatomical malformation of her inferior members) and *obésité pathologique*.[7] Brachet appears to base his judgement on Isabeau's deformities of the legs upon the adjective *basse* in the *Pastoralet,* which seems a very wide leap, indeed. Regarding the obesity, he cites Pintoin. However, when one follows the footnote, one discovers an ailing rather than outsized queen. In 1409, Pintoin reports, the king having recently returned to his senses, reiterated that during his "absences" the queen would substitute for him (*suppleret*). When the queen was prevented from stepping in, excessively burdened by *mole carnis* (physical difficulties) or other things, the dauphin would take over.[8] Brachet, following Bellaguet, translates this as excess weight. However, while *moles* might mean a massive physical object, it also means any serious burden or problem, and *moles carnis* is a routine expression for anguishes of the flesh in a philosophical sense. In the case at hand, the context demands that we understand the queen to be oppressed occasionally by physical maladies. Obesity is not a condition that flares up from time to time, preventing action.

In any case, the young king found Isabeau ravishing, for he insisted on a speedy marriage; his counselors hastily convened and decided on the cathedral in Arras as the wedding venue. But even this was not soon enough for Charles, who objected: why not simply marry there in Amiens? The wedding took place, as he requested, in the cathedral at Amiens. The young couple met on a Friday; they married the following Monday, July 17.

Froissart could not have been an eyewitness to the first meeting between

Charles and Isabeau. Nonetheless, his description of this event is valuable because it preserves a contemporary perception of the relationship between the royal pair. Pintoin records a similar story, although without Froissart's gusto, to make the same point. As Pintoin tells it, Charles chose Isabeau on the basis of her portrait, finding her the most beautiful of the three brides proposed to him.[9] The anecdote about the portraits is almost certainly not true. Still, its meaning is the same as that of Froissart's story: that the king was believed to have been very much in love with his wife. The stories of Charles' *coup de foudre* are not necessarily intended to bear witness to Isabeau's physical loveliness (although she may have been considered beautiful by her contemporaries), I would suggest, but rather to demonstrate the profundity of the king's emotional attachment to her. Love in the Middle Ages was conceived of as a heavily physical affect. Romance composers routinely equate love and physical desire. Modern readers will be wary of a "love" that expresses itself, as Charles's does in the story recounted by Froissart, as sexual desire. But for Froissart, desire and love are identical, or, to be more precise, Charles's desire for Isabeau is the outward sign of his great love. Moreover, the story tells us something about how Isabeau was perceived by others. It is rare to find a woman of the Middle Ages described as both beautiful and unworthy; the motif belongs very specifically to misogynistic discourse, like that of the jealous husband of the Ami's story in the *Roman de la Rose*. Otherwise, beauty signified moral value. Rather than an objective, observable characteristic, "beauty" was a subjective impression the viewer held of his or her object: the response of a viewer predisposed to like the person he or she was observing. Predictably, Isabeau's detractors do not call her beautiful. For example, as we have just noted, the pamphlet, the "Songe véritable," disparages her skin. Once again, however, the point is not her objective physical appearance but rather the attitude of those describing her. The delight with which the uncles and the king's entourage spread the news that the young man could hardly wait to marry the pretty princess, as recounted by Froissart, indicates that the princess's merit was perceived by others as well as the king.

Froissart supplies additional details that flesh out the image of the girl. Before her marriage, she made a three-week stop at Le Quesnoy in Picardy accompanied by her Uncle Frederick who was charged with delivering her safely to the French. There they visited her kinsmen Albert of Hainaut-Holland and his second wife, Marguerite (Albert and Marguerite were the parents of the boy and girl to whom Philip of Burgundy had married two of

his own children, at whose wedding Jeanne of Brabant had pressed for the king's Wittelsbach marriage. They were thus the parents of Count William, who would become the father-in-law of dauphin Jean de Touraine, and Marguerite, who married Jean sans Peur).[10] Froissart remarks that by nature the girl "estoit propre et pourveue de sens et de doctrine" (was tidy, clever, and well-educated).[11] But he also notes that her Bavarian style of dress was not acceptable within the universe to which her relations were preparing her entry. She was taught, therefore, how to dress in a manner worthy of the French court. In addition, she was instructed in courtly manners. Judging by Charles VI's positive reaction to her at the time of their first meeting, the pupil had rapidly and thoroughly absorbed the training she received from her fashionable kinswoman. The meaning of this story, I would suggest, is that Isabeau, even though unable to speak French and unschooled in courtly ways, rapidly learned how to conduct herself in a manner acceptable to the French. From the beginning Isabeau was appreciated as a worthy match for the king.

The love story recounted by Froissart and Pintoin, then, is more than a love story, for a queen was never just the wife of a king but also a complement to royal power, and therefore her suitability was of the utmost importance. As Françoise Autrand expresses it, "il est hors de doute qu'il y a, dans le modèle chrétien occidental, une face féminine du pouvoir" (without doubt, in the western Christian model, power has a feminine side).[12] We can follow Isabeau's progress as she evolves into Charles's "face féminine du pouvoir" with information from a number of sources. It is clear that her training for the role was taken seriously once she arrived in her new home. Charles left her the very day after the wedding to head for Damme in Flanders to defend the city's port against the English who were occupying it. According to Grandeau's itinerary, Isabeau departed Amiens for a three-month sojourn at Creil on July 20, traveling by way of Senlis.[13] The girl must have been nervous—first, her life had changed forever in just days, and, then, she was left to face her new situation alone. But when she arrived at the royal chateau of Creil she was taken under the wing of a virtuous expert in courtly comportment, Blanche, well-loved and elderly Duchess of Orleans.[14] Blanche of Orleans, born in 1316, was the posthumous daughter of Charles IV and Jeanne of Evreux. She had married Philip of Orleans, second son of Philip VI, and brother of Jean le Bon, grandfather of Charles VI. According to Pintoin, the venerable Blanche was the kingdom's expert on tradition.[15] Isabeau began her career in good hands.

Charles's initial delight in his wife did not diminish. Traces of the pleasure they took in being together throughout all the years of their marriage can be discerned. At the end of September during the first year of the marriage, Isabeau moved to the chateau at Vincennes, in the woods to the east of Paris. Although the chateau became an important military support point after 1405, when the conflict between Louis of Orleans and Jean sans Peur began to escalate, in 1385 it was a favorite royal residence. She spent the majority of the first year of her marriage there, joined from time to time by the king, who manifested his affection for her during these early days with gifts bearing the entwined initials of E and K, for Elisabeth and Karolus.[16] Grandeau cites a letter from marmouset Bureau de la Rivière to the Cardinal of Laon describing a small trip the two would take together in January of 1386. The plan was to go to Melun, Saint-Germain-en-Laye, and Maubuisson. According to Bureau de la Rivière, they "s'esbattront là entour, luy et la royne" (will amuse themselves there, he and the queen).[17] Nine months after that trip, in September 1386, Isabeau's first child, the first dauphin Charles, was born at the nearby chateau of Beauté. A story related by Froissart and confirmed by an charter studied by Henri Moranvillé, who corrects just one detail of location in Froissart's story, tells of the king returning with his entourage from a trip to the south of France in 1390, still enamored of his wife after five years. En route, the king, eager to see Isabeau and recognizing that his brother also missed his wife, Valentina Visconti, suggested that they leave the group behind and race home on horseback.[18] That the couple's intimate relationship continued after the king's illnesses began is verified not only by the fact that Isabeau continued to bear children but also by an entry in the accounts of 1398, describing a charge for the repair of a "un pavillon ront qui sert pour vestir et ordonner le roy quent il vient devers la royne" (a round tent where the king dresses and puts himself in order when he goes to the queen).[19] Two of the children, Catherine and the future Charles VII, can only have been conceived while the king was insane.[20] Also, the two slept together during times of trouble. The night of Jean Petit's justification, March 9, 1408, the king went to sleep with the queen; he then slipped into a state worse than anyone had seen in ten years.[21] Pintoin reports that Charles's voracious carnal appetite, which led him to violate his marriage, was a blot on his character.[22] This may or may not be true. However, the profundity of the king's attachement to his "tres amée Compaigne la Royne" and his affection for her radiates from the royal ordinances in which he leaves the care of the kingdom in her hands during his "absences."

As for Isabeau's feelings for the king, the documents allow us to piece together a portrait of a loving and loyal wife. Pintoin recounts her distress that her husband seemed not to know her when he was insane.[23] Her appeals to God as well as magicians that her husband be cured of his illness are recorded.[24] She donated money for the saying of masses in perpetuity for herself and Charles.[25] She dedicated their daughter, Marie, born 1393, to the convent of Poissy, and named Michelle, born 1395, for the patron saint of France, to whom Charles had prayed and to whose shrine, Mont-Saint-Michel he had made a pilgrimage just before Michelle's birth. In 1395, Isabeau ordered the bishop of Tournai as quickly as possible to have three processions performed by people who were fasting and walking barefoot.[26] Pintoin recalls the queen's resignation to the assignment of Odette de Champdivers (although he does not name her) to the job of mistress to the king.[27] Although the assignment was carried out with the queen's consent ("de consensus tamen regine"), she agreed, Pintoin notes, because the king showed violent tendencies toward her when he was ill. Presenting the king with a mistress was the lesser of two evils; therefore, she endured the situation, the chronicler explains ("illud tollerabat).[28] In her will of 1408, Isabeau left several donations to the chapter of the cathedral at Amiens, because this was the place where she and Charles had been married.[29] In 1409 Isabeau sent her children on a pilgrimage to Mont-Saint-Michel to pray for their father's health.[30]

But the surest sign of her attachment and sense of loyalty to the king is the effort she maintained up until the Treaty of Troyes to preserve the throne for him and his heir. As guardian of the throne, I would suggest, Isabeau was vitally interested in the politics of the realm but reluctant to take a leading role. Regarding her interest in politics, we are forced to rely on indirect clues, like the forty letters each that she addressed to the dukes of Burgundy, Orleans, and Berry between 1398 and 1402 recorded in her accounts.[31] This disputes the image of the queen as a political tyro stumbling on the scene for the first time in 1402. In summoning his wife to duty in 1402 by appointing her official mediator, Charles VI builds on what was already her political involvement. But it is equally clear that she never sought power for herself. At more than one point she voluntarily ceded hers to others: to the dauphin in 1408, to Jean sans Peur and the dauphin in 1409, to Jean sans Peur again in 1417. Still, she took on the responsibilities demanded of her by the king's "absences." She sought to protect the king's sovereignty, spiriting the dauphin away in 1405 and transporting the king himself to safety from Jean sans

Peur in 1408. She formed alliances with whoever seemed most capable of maintaining order in the kingdom. Finally, in 1417, she declared herself regent and joined forces with Jean sans Peur to rescue the king from the Armagnacs. Having rescued him, she did her best to bring a halt to the hostilities that had devastated the kingdom.

To return to the comment with which I began this discussion of Isabeau's role as wife of King Charles VI, that the relationship was one of a disabled man's dependence on his devoted wife, the queen's intellectual capacity has often been dismissed as lacking. The inevitable conclusion of such an assessment is that the king's trust was misplaced. From a distance of six centuries, it is impossible to judge the queen's grasp of the issues she was required to handle. But the existence of a personal library that she brought with her on her travels challenges the picture of her as intellectually limited. In 1487, "un coffre de bois couvert de cuir fermant à clef, ferré et cloué" (a trunk of wood covered with leather, that could be locked, with iron bands nailed onto it) was purchased to "porter en chariot les livres et romans de la royne" (to carry in the chariot the books and stories of the queen).[32] Susan Groag Bell's work on book-owning women in medieval Europe helps put Isabeau's thirty-nine known books into perspective. For the fifteenth century, only thirteen women owned between eleven and fifty books and only thirteen owned more than that; for the fourteenth century, the numbers dropped to seven who owned eleven to fifty and only one owned more. In this context, Isabeau's library is remarkable. And she owned representatives of a variety of literary genres. In a secular vein, as Vallet de Viriville explains, her "romans" seem to have included the *Chroniques de France,* lent her by Philip the Bold, a work of educational value for a foreign queen of France, as well as a collection of contemporary poems, the "Cent Ballades," which she purchased herself. She may have particularly enjoyed poetry, because Harley 4431 contains a collection of Christine de Pizan's poetry. Her books were cared for by her librarian, Catherine de Villiers, who herself must have been a bibliophile, for she had earlier served the Jeanne de Bourbon, queen of Charles V, by helping her to read books of hours.[33]

In addition to works in the vernacular, Isabeau also possessed a large collection of pious works, the maintenance of which her accounts record throughout the years. She owned a life of Saint Margaret, an *Heures de la Croix et du Saint-Esprit,* a *Petites Heures de Notre Dame,* a *Légende dorée,* and she commissioned the meditative work, the *Passion Isabeau*.[34] Thus beyond a pleasure in reading, the queen's library attests to another quality that

would have been deemed essential for her role as the feminine face of power: piety. Further supporting this assumption, she possessed a Franciscan confessor, six chaplains, and an organist among her entourage.[35] Scattered items in her accounts—portable altars, reliquaries, a table, and candle to say her hours in the dark—bear witness to her personal piety.[36] Rachel Gibbons offers ample evidence of the queen's generosity to religious establishments. In addition to the gifts she made during her lifetime, in her final will she left donations of property—for she had no money to leave after settling her debts and providing for her household—to Notre Dame, Saint Denis, and Poissy. In earlier wills, when her financial situation had been more favorable, she had offered bequests to Chartres, Senlis, the Sainte-Chapelle, and the Friars Minor and Notre Dame in Munich.[37]

A sixteenth-century reference to the queen's charity deserves mention. In *Les Mémoires et recherches de la dévotion, piété et charité des illustres Roynes de France* of 1586, Nicolas Houël describes that Isabeau "se demonstra fort devote, & merveilleusement pitoyable envers les pauvres, en ce qu'elle distribuoit ordinairement de grands biens aux hospitaux pour l'entretenement d'iceux, & pour la restauration des Eglises ruinées" (showed herself to be strongly devout and marvelously merciful toward the poor, in that she ordinarily distributed goods to the hospitals for their care and for the restoration of ruined churches).[38]

Mother

The traces of Isabeau's relationships with her children suggest that she was as devoted to them as she was to her husband. Over a period of twenty-one years, from the birth of her first baby, Charles, when Isabeau was about sixteen, until November 1407, when her last child, Philip, was born and died on the same day, she bore twelve children. Only three outlived her. Of her six sons, three died young—two small Charleses and a Philip. Two, Louis and Jean, died at just short of nineteen, while a third Charles survived to adulthood to become Charles VII. The girls fared better. Of the six girls, only Jeanne died as a baby. Isabelle, who at the age of seven became the second wife of Richard II of England (whose first marriage to Anne of Bohemia had been one of the catalysts for Isabeau's own marriage), lived to the age of nineteen, when she died bearing the child of her second husband, Charles of Orleans. The second Jeanne, duchess of Brittany, lived to be forty-two; Marie, Dominican nun at the convent of Poissy, lived to forty-five; Michelle,

first wife of Philip, son of Jean sans Peur, lived to twenty-seven; Catherine, queen of Henry V of England, thirty-seven.

Much of Isabeau's time in her early years was consecrated to childbearing and maternal activity; all evidence suggests that the queen was a caring mother, devoted to her children even before they were born. Yann Grandeau's itinerary indicates that before the births of Isabelle, Jeanne, Charles, Marie, Michelle, and Jean, she visited the pilgrimage site Saint-Sanctin-de-Chuisnes, near Chartres, which contained a belt of the Virgin Mary.[39] She also had relics brought to her during her pregnancies and purchased small pictures of gilded silver called "agnus dei" that "les femmes portent quant elles sont grosses" (women carry when they are pregnant).[40] Prayers were considered the most efficacious means of insuring a future child's health. It is important to keep this in mind when reflecting on Isabeau as a mother. Today a pregnant woman cares for her unborn child through diet, exercise, and regular medical care; Isabeau lent hers the equivalent care through pilgrimages and prayers. In the account of Burgundian court customs composed between 1484 and 1491 by Aliénor de Poitiers, we discover an interesting insight into Isabeau's optimism regarding her babies. According to Aliénor, quoted by Grandeau, until Isabeau, all queens of France gave birth in rooms decorated in white.[41] Isabeau chose green. Grandeau points out that Isabeau's devise was "hope." Perhaps then her reason for choosing green, the color for growth and hope in heraldry, was that she wished to give birth under a positive sign.

When the children were small, she kept them alongside her until they were weaned from their wet nurses; when she left Paris she often took them with her.[42] Her household accounts reveal that when she was separated from her children, she visited them, bearing gifts, and that she wrote letters to them.[43] In 1399 when the plague struck Paris, she sent the older children into the country for safety but remained behind herself with the baby, Jean, who was still too small to be moved. A document of April 15, 1404, entitled "Sauvegarde de la Reine Isabeau en faveur des Celestins de Notre-Dame a Paris," shows Isabeau guaranteeing to her "bien amez les religieux Celestins" (her well-loved Celestines) continued access to certain gardens and vineyards for which she, Isabeau, has had doors made so that "toutes et quantes fois qu'il nous plaira, nous et nos enfans puissions entrer es monastere et eglise desdiz religieux et aussi en leurs vignes et jardins et autres lieux, tant pour notre devotion comme pour l'esbatement et plaisance de nous et de nosdiz enfans" (whenever and as often as she like, she and her children could enter the

monastery and the church of the said order, and also their vineyards and gardens and other spots, both for devotion and for the entertainment and pleasure of herself and her children).[44]

The accounts also detail the devotional books that Isabeau purchased for her daughters, signals of her interest in their education.[45] While the boys would have received their education primarily from tutors, the mother played an important role in educating her daughters, as the proliferation of imagery of St. Anne, with her book and the Virgin, beginning in the fourteenth century, suggests.[46] The accounts show that she purchased books of hours and psalters; the detail that Michelle was given an "ABC of psalms" as a birthday gift brings Isabeau's relationships with her daughters to life.[47] Other details include a silver pan to make porridge ("paelle d'argent blanc à faire la bouillie"), and a golden mill trimmed with pearls and little brooms for the amusement of Madamoiselle Isabelle ("moulin d'or garni de perles et de balays petis, pour l'esbattement de madame Ysabel").[48] The luxurious trousseau for Isabelle as the seven-year-old was being prepared to become queen of England included dolls trimmed and provisioned with silver utensils ("garnies et estoffées de vaiselle d'argent").[49] The purchase of pets, parrots for Isabelle, Jeanne, and Michelle, and turtledoves for Catherine, birthday presents, toys, and clothes for special occasions are recorded as well, bearing witness to the queen's maternal interest.[50]

We also find Isabeau reacting ferociously in response to separation from her children. Although her society often required that mothers send their children far from home to be raised in the homes of their spouses, Isabeau resisted. Pintoin describes her dismay at learning that her son Jean was to be taken from her care and raised in the home of his new wife, Jacqueline, in Hainaut. Strong ties linked the families, as we have seen. Still, after the wedding festival, Pintoin reports, when the young Duke of Touraine's new mother-in-law moved to take the boy home with her, the queen voiced her extreme opposition.[51] But Isabeau could not prevent her son's departure; it had been written into the marriage treaty that the boy was to be raised in Hainaut by his in-laws. Isabeau's copious weeping at the death of her last baby, Philip, is likewise described by Pintoin: "Infantis immatura mors materna viscera conturbavit, totumque tempus purgacionis regina continuavit in lamentis" (The premature death of her baby distressed her in her innermost maternal being, and during the entire time of the birth, the queen continued to lament).[52]

Isabeau seems to have enjoyed close relationships with her daughters even

after they left home. Jeanne, Duchess of Brittany, came to visit her mother for several months over the summer of 1415.[53] As for her daughter Isabelle, little queen of England, messages were transmitted between the girl and her mother by Pierre Salmon. Charles VI was "très joieux de savoir le bon estat du roy d'Angleterre, et de Madame la royne sa fille. . . . Et aussi fut la royne après qu'elle ot veu ses lettres" (very happy to learn of the good condition of the King of England and of madame the queen, his daughter. . . . And the queen was also happy after she saw the letters).[54] When Richard II was deposed and presumably assassinated by order of Henry IV, Charles and Isabeau anguished while they negotiated their daughter's return. Documents related to the event describe how ambassadors were instructed to assure the girl that her rescue was under way and to urge her not to agree to any marriage plans that Henry IV might propose. If the ambassadors were able to speak to the girl alone, they were to tell her how much the king and queen desired to see her ("que le Roy et la Royne la désirent moult veoir") and to persuade her to do everything in her power to return home soon ("que elle mette la diligence que ele pourra à ce que tost puist retourner devers eulx").[55] Isabelle returned to France, where she was joyfully received. Pintoin describes the joy of her parents that their *dilectissimam filiam* had returned safely. Isabelle reentered her mother's household, where her status was necessarily less than it had been as it had been as queen of England. Nonetheless, Isabeau surrounded her with ladies even nobler than those who had surrounded her before her depature.[56] In 1406, the sixteen-year-old Isabelle was married to Charles of Orleans, son of Louis of Orleans, much to her chagrin; it was a demotion for the onetime queen of England to marry the son of a duke.[57] However, she seems not to have held the marriage against her mother. She is recorded as having visited Isabeau at the end of April 1409, just months before her death in childbirth on September 9.[58] Little Marie was sent to the convent at Poissy when she was four years old, but she was not forgotten. Isabeau's accounts demonstrate that Marie received *étrennes* and letters.[59] The youngest girl, Catherine, educated in the convent at Poissy where Marie had been consecrated, accompanied her mother during her imprisonment leading up to the Treaty of Troyes. Henry V, having met her, "estoit moult désirant de l'avoir en marriage, et aussi y avoit bien cause, car elle estoit moult belle dame, de hault lieu et gracieuse manière" (wanted very much to marry her, and for good reason, because she was a very beautiful woman, of high birth and gracious manner).[60]

Of Isabeau's relationships with her children, the most problematic for

modern readers is that with her youngest surviving child, Charles, whom she attempted to deprive of the throne of France with the Treaty of Troyes. I hope to have dealt adequately with this issue in chapter seven. But her later relationships with the daughters who survived her, Jeanne, married to the Duke of Brittany, and Catherine, queen of England, are slightly mysterious, as well. Only the nun, Marie, is mentioned in Isabeau's will. Jeanne and Catherine receive no attention at all. However, Grandeau offers two possible explanations.[61] First, he points out that the Jeanne had incited her husband to support the dauphin. And indeed, the Duke of Brittany, allied with the Burgundians after the Treaty of Troyes, signed an alliance with the Duke of Burgundy and Charles VII that laid the groundwork for the later reconciliation between the Burgundians and the dauphin. This rapprochement may have aroused Isabeau's wrath, concludes Grandeau. However, it seems impossible that the queen would not have welcomed the possibility of peace after all the years she had spent seeking it. And why no mention of Catherine? She was with her mother from the time of the queen's rescue by Jean sans Peur from Tours in 1417 until she departed France for England in 1421. Grandeau's second hypothesis regarding the absence of the two women from the queen's will seems much more plausible: that the surviving will was simply a portion of the entire, the "spiritual" rather than the "material" portion. In favor of this interpretation is the fact that the will mentions only donations to different churches; paying her creditors; alms for the poor; and gifts to her daughter, Marie, the nun. The plausibility of the explanation is increased by the fact that besides Jeanne and Catherine, the queen's ladies receive no mention either. Perhaps they were covered in the "material" will.

The black legend of Isabeau holds that she passed the early years of her marriage in a whirlwind of balls and parties, seducing Charles VI to follow her and neglecting their children. As noted in chapter two:

> Elle ne tente rien pour arrêter Charles VI, entraîné sur la pente fatale des plaisirs. Quand elle n'accomplit pas quelque pèlerinage, ou que ses couches ne la contraignent pas au repos, elle vit comme dans un tourbillon d'amusements folâtres, de splendides réjouissances. Et, pendant que le Roi gaspille ses forces, compromet sa dignité, se gâte l'intelligence, elle-même s'expose, par des fatigues immodérées, à ne donner au Royaume que des enfants chétifs.
> [She did not try to halt Charles VI, who was headed for destruction. When not on some pilgrimage or constrained to her bed by pregnancy,

she existed in a whirlwind of insane amusements, of splendid pleasures. And while the king wasted his strength, compromised his dignity, ruined his intelligence, she ran herself down to the point where she could give the kingdom only feeble children.][62]

But this aspect of the Isabeau story finds no support in any written source, even that of the judgemental Pintoin: stories about the queen's participation in parties that sapped her strength and that of her unborn offspring, causing them to be born weak, are completely absent from his chronicle. The queen plays no role in feasts described disapprovingly by Pintoin. For example, a huge festival was celebrated at Saint Denis at Easter time, 1389, to knight the sons of Marie of Blois, queen of Sicily and widow of Louis of Anjou, when she departed for Italy to protect their interests. Pintoin concludes the entry by adding that he would have left off the story there, but that he would like to follow the advice of those who want to see examples of bad as well as good. He then goes on to note that excessive eating and drinking took place and that many even soiled the sanctity of the religious house by committing adultery![63] However, Isabeau's presence at the feast is noted only when Pintoin remarks that the abbey at Saint Denis was reserved for her lodgings.[64]

A possible explanation for the notion of the queen as wild socialite may be Froissart's description of her lavish coronation celebration in 1389 and a 1393 wedding feast gone awry that has come to be known as the *bal des ardents*—feast organized by the king to celebrate the third marriage of Isabeau's dear friend, Catherine de Fastavarin. Isabeau had been accompanied by this friend when she first came from Bavaria, and the queen loved her dearly on account of her nationality and language (*quia nacionis et ydiomatis*).[65] The king and five of his men decided to disguise themselves as wild and hairy creatures to harass the groom, who had been widowed three times before.[66] Unfortunately, they chose the most flammatory material imaginable for their costumes, sewing themselves into linen cloth soaked in a type of wax on which they pressed tangled hemp. Louis of Orleans, roundly chastized for his stupidity by both Pintoin and Froissart, approached the six with his torch, leaning close to see who they were and inadvertently igniting some of them. The king escaped with his life, but four of the others were not so fortunate. The next day, a furious crowd of Parisians stormed the Hôtel Saint Pol thinking the king had died, but found him safe and sound. In popular literature the celebration is often attributed to Isabeau, as a means of inculpating her. But in fact, the king organized it. The story can also be used to verify the

queen's attachment to the king, for she is reported to have reacted hysterically and even fainted when she realized that he was among the burning revelers.

The king's lavish feasts, integral to his image as generous monarch of a powerful kingdom, cannot be regarded as "a whirlwind of insane amusements, of splendid pleasures." First, feasts were infrequent events. "Ces grandes assemblées sont rares: elles ont pour prétexte le mariage d'un prince ou la réception d'un chef d'Etat" (These grand assemblies were rare: they took place only for the wedding of a prince or the reception for a head of state), writes Grandeau on the basis of his study of the queen's accounts.[67] A factor in the lack of frequency was the difficulty in assembling the large crowds of nobles necessary for such events. As Werner Paravicini explains, invitations to court for brilliant receptions were obligations, like the duty to provide arms when called to battle, imposed by feudal custom. An invitation to a marriage celebration was a costly burden, requiring an elaborate gift; indeed, such celebrations were a form of taxation. Second, they were "moyens de création, de consolidation, de représentation de pouvoir" (means of creating, consolidating, and representing power).[68] They were not opportunities for Isabeau to dance until dawn.

Another possible explanation for the notion of Isabeau as a socialite neglectful of her childen is Froissart's remark that when the king had recovered from his first bout of illness people from all over the kingdom were so relieved that they converged on Paris to rejoice. Therefore at the Hôtel Saint Pol, throughout the long winter nights, there were many "danses et caroles et moult d'esbatements devant le roy et la royne et la duchesse de Berry et la duchesse d'Orleans" (dances and carols and much entertainment before the king and the queen and the Duchess of Berry and the Duchess of Orleans).[69] However, the king's court would have been the center of musical and literary activity in France. It is difficult to imagine that such activity would have been criticized by contemporaries.

In the absence of personal documents, we can only imagine Isabeau's emotions toward her children. However, as I noted above, she commissioned a work in 1398, the *Passion Isabeau,* which forcefully emphasizes the tender relationship between Jesus and the Virgin in its affective language. This meditation on the life and passion of Christ, based on the *Latin Meditationes vitae Christi,* brings to life a heartbreakingly concerned mother and her affectionate son. We find Mary anxiously anticipating her son's return from Jersalem in the early days of his career: she waited at home "en tresgrant angoisse et douleur de cuer" (in very great anguish and heartsick; 73, lines

433–34). She "receut son doulz enfant" (received her sweet child; 73, line 434) and begged him not to return to Jerusalem because "ceste dure gent te veult tant de mal" (those cruel people want to hurt you; 73, line 444). Jesus responded "a sa tendre mere tres humblement" (very humbly to his loving mother; 434, line 447). Later, as she watches her son in agony upon the cross, Mary begs God "de alleger aucunement ses paines et les lui faire plus portables" (to relieve his suffering a little and make it more bearable for him; 165, lines 3688–89). From his position on the cross, Jesus sympathizes with his mother's sorrow and feels his "cuer tres perciés et toutes les entrailles et corps et ame tous esmeus par pitié" (heart torn and his insides and body and soul all moved by pity; 165, lines 3692–94). He recognizes that his mother's heart is attached to him, hanging on the cross with him, and he has no doubt that she would happily join him physically if she could. If we assume that a person's emotions are shaped by the templates offered by his or her culture, Isabeau certainly possessed a model for interpreting the protective love and sorrow she experienced as a mother.

Friend

Because of the lack of distinction between private and public life within the household of a medieval queen, Isabeau's friends were necessarily her staff, the members of her household. Discussions of the queen's household frequently evoke the miniature of Christine de Pizan presenting the manuscript Harley 4431 to Isabeau as she sits surrounded by her ladies in her chambers.[70] The miniature, like Christine's *Cité des dames,* imagines a society of women that parallels, mirrors, and sometimes corrects the society of men. The society of women, both in fact and fiction, occupied its own separate space. As Autrand writes: "L'Hôtel—au sens technique du terme—d'un prince se passe, en effet, fort bien de dame. A côté de l'Hôtel de Monseigneur existe celui de Madame, chacun des deux ayant son personnel, sa gestion, ses finances." (The hotel—in the technical sense of the term—of a prince had no need of a woman. Beside the hotel of Monseigneur stood that of Madame, each with its own personnel, administration, finances.)[71] But despite its physical separation from the society of men, the society of women was imagined as a necessary part of society as a whole. "En revanche," continues Autrand,

> la représentation du pouvoir n'omet jamais l'épouse du prince. L'art du temps est là pour en témoigner: statues du prince et de la princesse de

part et d'autre des portes de châteaux ou d'églises, sans parler des orant dans les chapelles, des vitraux, des peintures de manuscrtis, du décor amorié, partout apparaît non le prince mais le couple princier.
[On the other hand, the representation of power never omits the wife of the prince. The art of the time testifies to this: statues of the prince and prince on either side of the doors of castles and churches, not to mention figures praying in chapels, stained-glass windows, manuscript illuminations, heraldry, everywhere appears not just the prince but the princely couple.][72]

Isabeau's household, thus, constituted a world parallel to that of the king. But before exploring this idea in more detail, it is necessary to revise certain misconceptions about this entity that have long circulated. The black legend holds that when she was not feasting, Isabeau presided over an entourage of extravagant pleasure-seeking courtiers, out of sight of the king, at her small manor, the Hôtel Barbette, situated in what is today the Marais in Paris. As Grandeau's itinerary clearly demonstrates, however, the queen spent little time in the Hôtel Barbette. She possessed the property between 1399 and 1408, but during those nine years she passed fewer than six months there.[73] Before 1390, the royal couple's principal residence was the château at Vincennes just outside of Paris. As of 1390, this shifted to the Hôtel St. Pol, and, from that point on, the queen spent the majority of her time there. The idea of the dissolute Isabeau frittering away money with her debauched courtiers derives from Pintoin's mention of the sermon of Jacques Legrand, the purpose of which I discussed in chapter four, and the incident of April 1417, reported in several of the chroniclers, when Isabeau's household was closed down by the Armagnacs on the pretext that her courtiers had been leading dissolute lives. But as we have seen, the political intent of this intervention was clear. In contrast with the dark mythology, the household that emerges from the documents is characterized by the constant buzz of official activity carried on within its purview. It is in a sense a *cité des dames,* but one that housed many male officers, as well.

The organization of Isabeau's household, or *hôtel,* as well as the biographies of the ladies in her entourage have been studied.[74] I will not repeat the information collected in these studies but simply cull some of the details pertinent to this revision of Isabeau's character. As we noted in chapter four, the king's retinue constituted the court, the *curia;* but the queen had maintained a separate household since the mid-thirteenth century.[75] The household es-

tablished for Isabeau at the time of her marriage was entirely comparable to those created for her predecessors. Comparing the households of Jeanne of Burgundy, queen of Philip V, in 1316, and Isabeau between the years 1398–1406, Rachel Gibbons indicates that Isabeau's spent between a low of 41,969 livres parisis to a high of 52, 690 livres parisis per year, while Jeanne's spent roughly one quarter that amount, 12,410 livres parisis.[76] The difference can be explained by the more comprehensive staff that Isabeau required, and also by the larger number of children with retinues of their own dependent on her. Various accounts remain from the years 1398–1406 and then again from 1409 to 1417 to cast light on the composition of Isabeau's staff. Gibbons explains that because of her responsibilities related to the government of the realm, she employed a group of political counselors, who alone received 46 percent of the total pensions paid out in 1409–10, an indication of their importance to the queen.[77]

As for the characters of those by whom Isabeau was surrounded, when the lives of the ladies of her entourage are examined, the notion of her as the head of a group of debauched courtiers appears farfetched. Grandeau's collection of information about her closest circle allows us to flesh the group out a bit, revealing a well-loved queen surrounded by ladies known for their impeccable moral status. Throughout her life, her personal entourage, that is, the ladies who followed her in her daily activity, was composed of about fifteen women.[78] At the summit of the fifteen were three or four *dames de chambres,* one of whom exercised the office of guardian of the queen's seal, all chosen for their lofty social rank and the prestige of the houses they represented, as well as for their exemplary conduct. These women were often widows, because of the requirement that they be present at all times.

That exemplar of charity, Blanche, Duchess of Orleans, was the first to occupy a position of confidant to the queen, as we have seen. Others occupying the position included the mother-daughter pair of Madame d'Eu and Mademoiselle de Dreux, cousins of Charles VI. Madame d'Eu, Isabelle de Melun, was praised by Christine de Pizan as a *sage et prudente mesnaigière.*[79] Her daughter, Jeanne, who had been widowed on the very day of her wedding, when her husband, Simon de Thouars, Count of Dreux, was killed in a joust, remained a widow for the rest of her life. Another long-term member of this close circle was the notably pious Jeanne de Luxembourg (whom Pintoin describes as *insignis et devotissima domicella de Lucembourgo*), who divided her time between Isabeau's household and the

royal abbey at Moncel.[80] The queen's affection for Jeanne was so great that she could not stand to be separated from her; they were still in contact in 1416. Another of the queen's *dames* was Catherine de Fastavarin, who served the queen until her death some time in 1401. Two of Catherine's children are later found in the service of Louis of Guyenne, demonstrating that the ties between the women extended into future generations.

In the first years after her marriage, Isabeau's *dames* and *demoiselles d'honneur* were assigned to her. After Charles declared himself free of his uncles' influence and brought his father's group of counselors, the marmousets, back to court, some of the wives of the marmousets joined her intimate circle. Madame de la Rivière, praised by Christine de Pizan for her generosity, seems to have been a special favorite of the queen.[81] Letters sent to her by the queen indicate that even after the fall of the marmousets, Isabeau continued to rely on her. Madame de Nouvion, wife of marmouset Jean le Mercier, Seigneur de Nouvion, left the queen's service after the fall of her husband. But her son, Charles, was married to one of the queen's ladies from Germany, Isabeau la Maréchale.[82] Marcel Thibault speculated that

> la Reine assista indifférente à la chute des Marmousets; en effet, si elle avait témoigné quelque déplaisir de l'évenèment, ou si, au contraire, elle y avait applaudi, nous le saurions comme nous savons que le ministres, fort malmenés par les Princes, durent la vie et la conservation d'une partie de leurs biens à la jeune duchesse de Berry qui intercéda pour eux, et à l'intervention de Charles VI dans un de ses moments de ludicité.
> [the queen watched the fall of the marmousets with indifference; indeed, had she experienced some displeasure over the incident, or if, on the contrary, she had applauded it, we would know, just as we know that the ministers, badly treated by the uncles, owed their lives and the conservation of some of their goods to the young Duchess of Berry who interceded for them and to the intervention of Charles VI during one of his moments of lucidity.][83]

However, the reason for Isabeau's silence regarding the marmousets is revealed by Froissart, who explains that just before their fall, the Duchess of Burgundy was assigned to monitor the queen. In other words, Isabeau was closely guarded during that period. Froissart describes the older woman's stranglehold over Isabeau in harsh terms: "Pour ces jours, la duchesse de Bourgoingne qui estoit une crueuse et austère dame, se tenoit à Paris delés la

royne de France, et en avoit la souveraine administration, ne nuls, ne nulle ne parloit à la royne fors par le moien d'elle." (During those days, the duchess of Burgundy, who was a cruel and austere woman, stayed at the side of the Queen of France and had sovereign administration over her, so that no one could talk to the queen without going through her.)[84] If Froissart's understanding of the situation is accurate, the Duchess of Burgundy would have been imposed upon the queen to keep her silent, the uncles knowing full well her attachment to her ladies and thus her inevitable concern for the welfare of their husbands.

But for a mediator queen's success, it was crucial that she exercise control over her own household. Although the early impression of Isabeau is that of a vulnerable young woman, as she matured she showed more independence, working for her family and creating advantageous marriages for her ladies. For one thing, she supported her brother's career over a period of nearly twenty-five years, a tribute undoubtedly to the siblings' closeness, but also evidence of her sense of herself as a mediator between French and Bavarian interests. Louis of Bavaria was a frequent presence at her court between 1391 and 1415. The queen's attachment to Germany was fiercely criticized by nineteenth-century historians, and the spirit of these attacks lives on in such unsupported and unsupportable comments as her "grasp of French was never complete and she spoke with a thick guttural accent to the end of her days."[85] But as queen, part of Isabeau's role was to foster good relations between the French kingdom and its neighbors and to promote her family. For what is the queen if not the champion of her family, the nexus for creating relationships among different kin groups, the means of mediation between competing interests? Women exerted influence within their own primary circles, and across less closely related circles, as well, acting as links between different circles of acquaintances and families. While maintaining kinship ties, they also created ties with other lineages through marriage, and thus their circles contained a variety of different networks that they could exploit if they were socially skilled. It is to be expected that Isabelle would serve as a link between those close to her and other contacts she could secure through her influence; this is what it means to be politically involved in the fifteenth century.

Isabeau remained attached to her kin long after her departure from her homeland. In 1392 she welcomed her cousin, Bonne Visconti, to the French court.[86] Daughter of Carlo—son of Bernabo Visconti, he had fled to the court of Isabeau's father after Bernabo's assassination—and Beatrice of Ar-

magnac, Bonne was forced to leave the court of Savoy where she had been placed following the upheaval. She grew up under the queen's care, remaining until the Cabochian revolt. Moreover, the queen's attachment to Bavaria is attested by a letter of February 1392, which she wrote to the Council of Munich to inform them of the birth of the dauphin.[87]

The queen's ability to maintain a level of interest in Germany at the French court witnesses her influence:

> Ein gelegentliches Geschenk an nach Deutschland zurückkehrende Ritter, ein zufällig in Strassburg erhalten gebliebener lateinischer Gruss an den Vater müssen genügen, um den regelmässigen Austausch von Lebenszeichen und Nachrichten durch Boten zu beweisen; und dass man in Paris auch über die politischen Ereignisse in Bayern auf dem Laufenden war, zeigt ein Brief Karls VI von 1388 an Strassburg, in dem er die Stadt warnt, sich den schwäbischen Städten in Kampf gegen seinen Schwiegervater Herzog Stephan anzuschliessen, und ein anderer, in dem er seinem Schwiegervater zu dem errungenen Sieg gratuliert.
> [An occasional present to a knight returning to Germany, a Latin greeting to her father that by chance remained in Strasbourg must suffice to testify to the regular exchange of the signs of life and news through messengers; and a 1388 letter from Charles VI to Strasbourg in which the city is warned not to join forces against his father-in-law Duke Stephen shows that the Parisians were aware of political events in Bavaria, as does another in which he congratulates his father-in-law on his victory.][88]

And yet, her relationship with her brother, Louis, has come in for criticism. In particular, the queen has long been believed to have surreptitiously siphoned money from the French treasury off to him. Louis left Bavaria with his followers on his first trip to Paris in mid-November 1391, remaining until 1393 or 1394. During this initial visit, he received a pension of 5,000 francs a year from the king. Examples of the pensions paid by the French to similarly situated German vassals indicate that the pension was normal. Louis of Orleans paid the Margraf of Luxembourg 6,000 francs a year, while Isabeau's uncle, Frederick, had received 4,000 a year.[89] As for the story reported by Pintoin that Isabeau was transferring money to the Germans in 1405, it can be explained as part of a 120,000 franc payment owed Louis, as the dowry of his bride, Anne of Bourbon, which the king had promised to pay.[90] The wedding, which took place on Louis's third trip to France, on Oc-

tober 8, 1402, also brought an increase in his pension, which was thereafter worth 12,000 francs a year. But as was often the case, the king did not have sufficient funds on hand to honor his debts. Thus he offered Louis valuable objects, including the *Goldenes Rössl,* which the duke then sent to Bavaria. Pintoin reported the outrage of the citizens of Metz, who did not understand why valuables were being transported to Germany. However we may blanch at the idea of the passing around of extremely valuable jeweled presents, *étrennes* like the *Goldenes Rössl* were systematically exchanged as a form of currency: they were melted down and transformed into new items. This is why so few examples remain today.

Still, Isabeau's influence never compared with that of the king's male relatives, and if Louis of Bavaria's trip to France was financially very profitable for him, he did not achieve the status at the French court that Isabeau had hoped for him.[91] Neither Louis of Orleans nor Philip of Burgundy attended Louis of Bavaria's wedding to Anne of Bourbon.[92] Nor was Isabeau successful in an attempt to have him named *connétable,* a position he was prevented from receiving by Louis of Orleans.[93] Little trace of Louis of Bavaria's influence can be perceived; he did not sit at the Royal Council. Theodor Straub, Louis' biographer, notes that "Gleichstellung mit den Fürsten des Hofes war noch nicht erreicht" (parity with the dukes of the court was not yet achieved).[94]

The story of Isabeau's relationship with Louis has an unhappy ending, for after a lifetime of accepting gifts from his sister, he was unable or unwilling to return the favor when she requested help from him. When after the Treaty of Troyes the queen found herself living under straitened circumstances in English-occupied Paris, she appealed to her brother, then definitively established in Bavaria, for support. As Grandeau explains, in July 1405, Louis had ceded Isabeau a number of properties as collateral on a loan of 57,000 francs.[95] Isabeau had abandoned usufruct of the properties until the death of their father. But when she requested the revenue now owed her, Louis refused. Isabeau called on Holy Roman Emperor Sigismund to intervene on her behalf, which he did without result. The Duke of Bavaria's reason for his refusal was that he was involved in a war at the time and could not afford to come to his sister's rescue.

Isabeau's household after her first several years in France came to shelter a sizeable German contingent, besides her brother. Grandeau notes that she had only one German lady in her company, Catherine de Fastavarin, from 1385 until the mid-1390s. But as of 1396, the knights accompanying Louis

of Bavaria began to bring the young women of their houses to the French court: six lived there in 1402 and ten in 1406. Most returned to Bavaria between 1413 and 1417. One of her *dames* was the Bavarian Anne de Semihier, wife of Stephen Schmiecher von Schmiechen, who accompanied Louis of Bavaria on his first trip to France in 1391. Madame de Semihier may be the guardian of the queen's seal who left Isabeau's household during the crisis of 1405—the Madame Minchière to whom Pintoin refers, although he confuses her name. But although the queen and Madame de Semihier parted ways in 1405, there is no reason to believe that they did so on bad terms, for her husband and a daughter called Isabeau remained in Queen Isabeau's service. Another of Isabeau's Bavarian ladies, Madame de Moy, served the queen from 1405 until her death, when Madame de Moy was at the queen's deathbed. Grandeau writes that Madame de Moy had been called home to Germany by her brothers, who wanted to place her in a second marriage in 1423. Madame de Moy, however, remained with the queen.[96] One cannot help but be disappointed to discover that Marie, Isabeau's daughter who became a nun at Poissy, challenged her mother's will, attempting to deprive Madame de Moy and other of Isabeau's ladies of what the queen had left them.[97] Marie's case was dismissed in September 1437. Another lady close to Isabeau was Catherine of Alençon, second wife of the queen's brother, Louis of Bavaria. For reasons unknown, Catherine remained behind with Isabeau when Louis returned to Germany for good in 1415. As Grandeau explains, Louis seems to have abandoned his wife completely, leaving her without means. Isabeau wrote to her brother on Catherine's behalf, describing the disress the woman had experienced on account of his neglect. When he continued to ignore his wife, Isabeau intervened with Henry VI to have Catherine allotted an annual rent of 2,000 livres tournois.[98]

Isabeau's black legend holds that not only the queen herself but her ladies suffered from a bad reputation during their own time; a recent article aiming to flesh out the reasons for the May 22, 1413, arrest of a contingent of officers and ladies from Isabeau's household, at the height of the Cabochian revolt, asserts that they were the target of "repeated verbal attacks. They were hit by accusations from all political sides, represented negatively by preachers, royal propagandists, nobles, and people in the city streets. Systematically the women were stigmatized as disruptive, conniving, malicious, and publicly dangerous."[99] Like the notion of Isabeau's bad reputation among her contemporaries, the idea that the queen's ladies were held in bad repute is tenacious. This article offers no evidence that the ladies had been

dogged by *mala fama* over the years but simply assumes this to have been the case. And yet the contemporary chroniclers indicate no such thing.

The idea of Isabeau's defamed ladies is so pervasive that I would like to consider it here in this discussion of her household. The ladies, argues the article, "were arrested and hauled away because they had been represented as playing their courtly role too well. They were too visble, too extravagant, too quick with words."[100] I would argue that, on the contrary, the ladies' arrest does not indicate their bad reputations. As I have been suggesting throughout this study, we cannot reasonably speak of a bad reputation in the midst of a feud; depending on the side with which one is allied, one will be popular with that side and unpopular with the other. The ladies, like the male officers of the king and the dauphin who were arrested at the same time, found themselves on the wrong side of the dispute. Jean sans Peur was in control of the city at the time: Isabeau and the ladies were not sufficiently Burgundian. As we have seen, by 1413, after a period of alliance with Jean sans Peur, the dauphin Louis and the queen had separated themselves from his influence.

The arrest of the ladies must be seen the larger context of a series of arrests of non-Burgundians in positions of power. The arrests of the Jean de Vailly, the dauphin's chancellor, and Jacques de la Rivière, his chamberlain, both of whom the young man had appointed to replace the Duke of Burgundy's men, along with several other of his men, preceded the arrests of Isabeau's ladies on April 28. On May 22, another group of rebellious Parisians broke into the Hôtel Saint Pol, where they demanded that a group of the queen's entourage be handed over: this time those taken prisoner included Louis of Bavaria and Jean de Nielles, the Burgundian forced on the dauphin as his chancellor and replaced by Jean de Vailly (Jean de Nielles was quickly released), along with several other officers from the households of the dauphin and the queen.[101] At the same time, a group of Isabeau's ladies and *demoiselles* was arrested. They were held in prison until the dauphin was able to release them on August 4.[102]

The ladies, then, were arrested, like their male counterparts from the households of the king, the dauphin, and the queen, because they held well-paid positions of importance and influence. The chroniclers draw no distinction between the reasons for arrest or treatment of the groups on the basis of their gender; they leave no hints that the ladies were defamed, or at least defamed in any way different from the men.

It is important, I believe to recognize that Isabeau's household was not a

particular target of misogynistic criticism during its own time, or, at least, nothing indicates that this was the case. This is not to argue that Isabeau's household was considered to be on a par in terms of power with the king's. Rather, it is to argue that the queen and her ladies comported themselves in conformity with norms of behavior. And indeed, when Isabeau was not executing her exceptional role on the Royal Council during the king's "absences," her household functioned like that of a tradtional queen, mirroring and thereby reinforcing the activity of the king's household, reproducing the society of men in the society of women, so to speak. One catches a glimpse of this parallel women's society at work behind such episodes as Froissart's depiction of the Duchess of Burgundy's strict monitoring of the queen's activity after the downfall of the marmousets, as I described above. The duchess was carrying out in Isabeau's household the actions that corresponded to her husband's work in the king's court. Another episode in Froissart offers a similar insight into the way the the societies of men and women parallel each other. The situation occurs just after the fall of the marmousets, as well, and depicts a furious Valentina Visconti, Duchess of Orleans, reacting to the the Duchess of Burgundy who has assumed the place in line just after the queen. The outrage of Valentina when forced to cede to the Duchess of Burgundy can be seen as the corollary within the society of women to the Duke of Orleans's constant assertions of his priority over the Duke of Burgundy. Froissart describes Valentina giving vent to her anger, insisting that because her husband was in line for the crown just after the king, she, not the Duchess of Burgundy, should follow the queen.[103] One further example involving Valentina reinforces the notion of Isabeau's household as a parallel to the king's. In 1395, Valentina awards *étrennes* for the first and only time to Isabeau's *grand maître d'hôtel,* Philip de Savoisy, and to seven of her ladies.[104] The date corresponds to the drop in support for Valentina's father, Giangaleazzo Visconti, at the French court.[105] Valentina makes an appeal on behalf of her father through the most important members of Isabeau's household.

Based on his study of the queen's accounts, Grandeau concludes that her relationship with her ladies was one of great mutual affection. He points out that as far as we know, she was betrayed only once, a reference to the garbled story of intrigue related by Pintoin. This is quite amazing, Grandeau explains, "en cette époque de désordre, où les courtisans impatients, avides, peu soucieux de se compromettre, changeaient de maître, selon le succès des factions" (in this period of disorder, when impatient courtisans, greedy, unwilling to compromise, changed master according to the success of the fac-

tions).[106] The stability of her personnel, he continues, "alors exceptionnelle, témoigne devant l'histoire de ses vertus. Catherine de Villiers la servit près de trente ans, Amélie de Moy plus de vingt cinq, et vingt quatre Isabelle de Malicorne. Deux et peut-être même trois générations de La Fauconnière lui demeurèrent fidèles." (exceptional at the time, bears witness to her virtues. Catherine de Villiers served her nearly thirty years, Amélie de Moy over twenty-five, twenty-four for Isabelle de Malicorne. Two or maybe three generations of La Fauconnières were faithful to her.)[107]

Conclusion

It is agreed that Isabeau was not a depraved woman of insatiable appetites. The evidence to support such an assessment simply does not exist. But this does not mean that her life necessarily must be of interest to historians: of the few historians who have written on the queen, many consider her to be a victim—if an innocent one—of the more powerful players in the Burgundian-Armagnac war, an incompetent and vacillating queen, greedy, and, to put it bluntly, rather stupid, and therefore unworthy of serious attention. Although one cannot really speak of a debate over the queen's role—for references to her thus far have not been formulated as part of a debate—one can speak of a discussion that has slowly begun to open up over the degree and nature of her role in the political life of her times.

Was Isabeau an active, politically savvy queen? Or was she a toy in the hands of the more powerful Duke of Burgundy, a woman of perhaps mediocre intelligence more inclined to luxury than politics, who would have been happiest as a wife and mother: "La petite Bavaroise aimant son mari, ses enfants, a perdu la tête au milieu de la luxueuse cour de France," Marie-Véronique Clin writes. "Incapable d'avoir une ligne de conduite politique pour remédier aux maux qui rongent le royaume, elle a accordé sa confiance aux uns, puis aux autres, cherchant toujours à ménager celui des parties qui lui parassait le plus fort." (The little Bavarian, loving her husband, her children, lost her head in the midst of the luxurious French court. Incapable of implementing a political program to remedy the woes that distressed the kingdom, she put her confidence in first one person and then another, always trying to manipulate the parties that seemed to her to be the strongest.)[108]

The verdict on Isabeau is still out, awaiting further study. My goal in this chapter has been to reread and draw together a number of sources to offer

a response to the question of what sort of figure she was. I have tried to make the case that Isabeau not only manifested an interest in and a talent for politics before she was forced into a central role by Charles's madness but that she was also perceived to possess the qualities of an effective mediator. That is, that she was considered to be an intelligent woman and important ally by her many of her contemporaries. Regarded positively as a wife, mother, and queen, Isabeau is, I propose, worthy of further attention.

Conclusion

The rehabilitation of Isabeau of Bavaria has been under way for decades. Despite the fact that scholars focusing upon her have unanimously concluded that she acquired the reputation she bears today only after her death and then within a specific political context, many working in tangential areas like the Hundred Years War, Joan of Arc, Charles VII, and queenship, continue to treat her black legend as history. Rather than rebut the arguments of the historians who have revised Isabeau's career, detractors of the queen perpetuate old narratives of inept political opportunism entwined with tales of debauchery, often bolstered by the visual correlative of obesity. A reasoned argument that Isabeau seriously lacked political acumen and an analysis of the effects this lack may have had upon the French civil war of the early fifteenth century does not exist. As the negative binary of Joan of Arc, the image of the lascivious queen has never required supporting evidence. Indeed, the queen, like Joan of Arc, must be seen as a *lieu de mémoire*.[1] Pierre Nora has written that we must approach *lieux de mémoire* "less interested in 'what actually happened'" than in the "perpetual re-use and misuse," of the past, "its influence on successive presents; less interested in traditions than in the way in which traditions are constituted and passed on."[2] The tenaciousness of Isabeau's black legend suggests that in attempting to set the record straight one enters into an argument over how to remember an element of the collective heritage, an element of real cultural importance, as I have tried to demonstrate in this study.

But I hope to have shown that Isabeau is worthy of interest for reasons beyond the mythology that surrounds her and that her career merits further study. Her tenure has not figured in any major study of regency as it developed in France, although she is an important transitional figure. She is granted a spot in the broader history of the institution covered in Marie-Luise Heckmann's *Stellvertreter, Mit- und Ersatzherrscher: Regenten, Generalstatthalter, Kurfürsten und Reichsvikare in Regnum und Imperium vom*

13. bis zum frühen 15. Jahrhundert. And yet, despite the importance of Heckmann's study of the various forms taken by regency in medieval France and the Empire, Isabeau's career deserves attention in a specifically French monarchical context. Her regency might be viewed plausibly as an end point in the history set out in *Les Régences et la majorité des rois sous les Capétiens directs et les premiers Valois (1060–1375),* by Félix Olivier-Martin, who sees the regency ordinances of Charles V as the culmination of an evolution toward the regent as a sort of placeholder for the king.

Alternatively, her regency might be seen as a starting point for the history of later female regency in France, preceding by less than a century the first of the line of five women who governed the kingdom between 1483 and 1651. Possibly because Louis XI was aware of the disaster wreaked by the Armagnac-Burgundian feud, he excluded his nephew Louis of Orleans, later Louis XII, from power and awarded the care of the dauphin, the future Charles VIII, to his daughter Anne and her husband, Pierre of Beaujeu. Following Anne, Louise of Savoy, mother of François I, served as regent during the captivity of her adult son, while Catherine de Médicis, Marie de Médicis, and Anne of Austria all served as regents for their young sons. Although Isabeau herself unfairly became a negative exemplum for female rule among some seventeenth-century legal historians, the disasters caused by the warring male relatives of Charles VI generated such suspicion of male regents that for two centuries afterward females were preferred. Of course, as Katherine Crawford has shown, female regency was never uncontested but had to be reargued and recreated anew by each regent.[3] Still, as she also demonstrates, by the time Philip of Orleans was named regent of the five-year-old Louis XV, female regency was considered the norm; therefore, Philip "had to accommodate feminine imagery. The masculine prince figured representationally as maternal was a problematic as the feminine, heroic warrior queen."[4]

An important link between Isabeau and later female regents, I would suggest, is to be found in the writings of Christine de Pizan. Kingship was a subject of intense interest during the reigns of Charles V and Charles VI. Unfortunately, no one devoted a treatise to female regency that would allow us to understand how Isabeau's role was imagined by contemporary legal scholars. Still, Christine's writings offer some insight. She foregrounds the queen's in-between position, promoting her as a mediator, above the narrow political interests of the ducal factions. In other words, she draws up categories for understanding the queen vis-à-vis the others vying for primacy, and, through

her depictions of powerful female rulers, she attempts to rally support behind a figure of great moral authority. She emphasizes the queen's lack of self-interest, her maternal qualities, and her similarity to the Virgin and to Blanche of Castile.

The women who served as regents in early modern France modeled themselves after Christine's stories of clever mediators/regents, which were originally composed with reference to Isabeau. Anne of Beaujeu raised regent Louise of Savoy and Marguerite of Austria, who became regent of the Netherlands; both of these women owned tapestries illustrating Christine's *Cité des dames*.[5] Also, the advice that Anne of Beaujeu offers in her conduct book for her daughter, Suzanne, *Les Enseignements d'Anne de France, duchesse de Bourbonnais et d'Auvergne, à sa fille Susanne de Bourbon,* written around 1505, is strikingly similar in substance to that of the *Trois vertus*.[6] The *Trois vertus* was present in Anne's library, and, although no direct evidence proves that Anne read Christine's conduct book, Anne's lessons, like Christine's, teach to exert influence without appearing to do so.[7]

Furthermore, Christine's writings reveal the structures of the mental universe within which was produced the so-called Salic Law, which paradoxically promoted female regency by casting women as the safest guardian of the throne during the absence of the king for minority, illness, or other duties. Reader of the *Grandes Chroniques,* Christine was of course aware that the first Valois king, Philip VI, had ascended the throne by excluding women, but she never indicates disapproval of this exclusion.[8] The Salic Law began to take shape only in the 1420s, and Christine, thus, does not ground her arguments in this law.[9] However, in her description of the French monarchy in the *Livre du corps de policie,* she proclaims that the great fortune of the French is that they have never suffered under a foreign (*estrange*) king:

> Je tiens le peuple de France tres beneuré, lequel tres son commencement, qui fu de l'issue des Troiens, a esté gouverné non mie de princes estranges mais de ceulx meismes qui sont issus d'oir en hoir de ceulx qui tousjours les ont seigneuris, si qu'il appert par les anciennes histoires et les croniques qui de ce font mencion.
> [I hold the French people to be blessed, who from their very origins in the issue of Troy, have never been governed by foreign princes, but by their own, themselves issued from heir to heir of those who had always ruled over them, as is made clear by old histories and chronicles, which mention this.][10]

With *princes estranges,* Christine refers obliquely to the accession of Philip VI of Valois over Edward III of England. When Capetian Louis X died without male heir in 1316, his four-year-old daughter Jeanne might have become queen: female exclusion had not been fixed. However, Louis's brother, Philip V, took the throne on behalf of his little niece, promising to watch over the kingdom during her minority. In fact, Philip did not hand the throne back over to Jeanne when she reached maturity but kept it until he died without male heir, passing it then to his brother, Charles IV, the last Capetian. By the time Charles IV died leaving only a daughter, it was assumed that the throne would pass to the nearest male heir. Thus the throne passed to Philip VI, first Valois king, son of the younger brother of Philip IV. Although not yet articulated as a fundamental law of the kingdom, female exclusion was accepted to a large degree by the time that Philip VI ascended the throne.

Although Jeanne was excluded, her son, Charles le Mauvais, later claimed the throne, as did Edward III of England, through his mother, Isabella, sister of Kings Louis, Philip, and Charles. Christine's assertion that the French were lucky in never having been subjected to a foreign king, thus, bespeaks her awareness as well as her acceptance of the means by which the Valois had attained the throne and their justification thereof. Far from deploring their exclusion of Jeanne from the throne in 1316 or the succession of Philip VI in 1328 in place of Edward III of England, Christine silently includes the Valois in an "unbroken" line of French kings descended from the Trojans.[11] Although the role of the mediator queen theorized by Christine preceded and thus developed independently from the principle of female exclusion from the French throne that eventually came to be called the Salic Law, it arose out of the same set of assumptions about women as complementary to men, and, eventually intersecting in the sixteenth century, the two concepts, female exclusion and mediator queen, continued parallel. As Robert Luyt would write about the Salic Law in 1652: "Les reynes ont esté ordinairement préférées en ce choix à tous les Princes du sang, & aux autres seigneurs Ecclésiastiques ou séculiers, par cette mesme raison, que l'on ne peut pas craindre qu'elles usurpent la couronne à la succession de laquelle elles sont incapables par la Loy fondamentale de cette Monarchie." (Queens have normally been preferred in this choice to all other princes of the blood and other lords, secular or ecclesiastical, for this same reason, that we need not fear that they will usurp the crown, for they are prohibited from succession by the fundamental law of this monarchy.)[12]

Isabeau appears to have been operating within the framework of the me-

diator queen throughout her career, although it also seems that she did not accept all of the elements that would eventually be associated with the laws of succession in France, including the automatic succession of the king's eldest son to the throne. After long hesitation, she agreed to bar her and Charles VI's eldest son from the throne in favor of Henry V, whom she and Charles "adopted" as their own son, a move that was later determined to transgress the fundamental law of the kingdom. Or, perhaps, her view of succession was dynastic, following the practice of the Empire, as Heckmann suggests.[13] In any case, what is certain is that during the perilous historical moment that followed the death of Louis of Guyenne, Isabeau was no longer able to manage effectively the position that she occupied. As scapegoat theory warns, those positioned both inside and outside of official power face grave danger when society enters into a crisis.[14] When internal dissension threatens social collapse, members of a society instinctively seek an "insider/outsider" as a scapegoat on which to spend the violence they cannot afford to turn on themselves. Responsible for maintaining peace and order, but powerless to enforce the agreements she helps to effect, then, the mediating queen occupied an absurd role, a role that might as easily bring about her own destruction as fulfill the expectations it aroused with its promises of access to power.

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APPENDIX

FAMILIES AND ALLIES OF ISABEAU AND CHARLES VI

Family of Charles VI of France

The names of kings of France are shown in bold.

Jean I le Bon (1319–64), married Bonne of Luxembourg (1315–49)

- **Charles V** (1338–80), married Jeanne of Bourbon (1337–78)
  - **Charles VI** (1368–1422), married Isabeau of Bavaria (1371–1435); their issue below
  - Louis, Duke of Orleans (1372–1407), married Valentina Visconti (1368–1408)
    - Charles, Duke of Orleans (1394–1465), married Isabeau and Charles's daughter Isabelle of France (1389–1409)
    - Philip, Count of Vertus (1396–1420)
    - Jean, Count of Angoulême (1404–67)
- Louis, Count of Anjou, King of Naples (1339–84), married Marie de Chatillon (1345–1404)
  - Louis, Count of Anjou (1377–1417), married Yolande of Aragon (1381–1442)
    - Marie of Anjou (1404–63), married Isabeau and Charles's son **Charles VII** (1403–61)
- Jean, Duke of Berry (1340–1416)
- Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy (1342–1404), married Marguerite of Flanders (1350–1405)
  - Jean sans Peur, Duke of Burgundy (1371–1419), married Marguerite of Bavaria (1363–1423)
    - Marguerite (1393–1441), married Isabeau and Charles's son Louis the Dauphin (1397–1415)
    - Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy (1396–1467), married Isabeau and Charles's daughter Michelle of France (1395–1422)
- Isabelle (1348–1372), married Giangaleazzo Visconti (1351–1402)
  - Valentina Visconti (1368–1408), married Louis, Duke of Orleans (1372–1407)

Family of Isabeau of Bavaria

Stephen III, Duke of Bavaria (1337–1413), married Taddea Visconti (1351–81)

- Louis VII, Duke of Bavaria (1365–1447), married Anne of Bourbon-La Marche (1380–1408); married Catherine of Alençon (c. 1396–1462)
- Isabeau of Bavaria (1370–1435), married to **Charles VI** (1368–1422)

Family of Isabeau and Charles VI

- Charles the Dauphin (1386)
- Jeanne (1388–90)
- Isabelle (1389–1409), married Richard II, King of England (1367–1400); Charles, Duke of Orleans (1394–1465)
- Charles the Dauphin (1392–1401)
- Jeanne (1391–1433), married Jean, Duke of Brittany
- Marie (1393–1438)
- Louis the Dauphin (1397–1415), married Marguerite of Burgundy (1393–1441)
- Jean the Dauphin (1398–1417), married Jacqueline of Hainaut (1401–1436)
- Michelle (1395–1422), married Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy (1396–1467)
- Catherine (1401–37), married Henry V, King of England (1387–1422)
  - ✦ Henry VI, King of England (1421–71), married Marguerite of Anjou (1430–82)
- **Charles VII** (1422–61), married Marie of Anjou (1404–61)
- Philip (1407)

Marmousets, Allies of Charles V and Charles VI of France

Bureau de la Rivière (d. 1400)
Jean de Montaigu (ca. 1349–1409)
Olivier de Clisson (1336–1407)
Jean Le Mercier, Seigneur de Nouvion (d. 1397)
Pierre le Bègue de Villaines (d. ca. 1406)

NOTES

Abbreviations

BEC	*Revue Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Chartes*
Bueno de Mesquita	Bueno de Mesquita, David Meredith. *Giangaleazzo Visconti: Duke of Milan (1351–1402)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1941.
Cochon, Cousinot	*Chronique de la Pucelle ou chronique de Cousinot, suivie de la chronique Normand de P Cochon, relatives aux régnes de Charles VI et de Charles VII, restituées à leurs auteurs et publiées pour la première fois intégralement à partir de l'an 1403, d'après les manuscrits, avec notices, notes, et développements.* Originally published 1859. Edited by Auguste Vallet de Viriville. New York : Elibron Classics, 2005.
"An Epistle"	Christine de Pizan. "The Epistle of the Prison of Human Life" with "An Epistle to the Queen of France" and "Lament on the Evils of the Civil War." Edited and translated by Josette Wisman. New York: Garland, 1984.
Froissart	Froissart, Jean. *Œuvres de Froissart. Chroniques.* Edited by Joseph-Marie-Bruno-Constantin Kervyn de Lettenhove. 26 vols. Osnabrück: Biblio Verlag, 1967.
Juvénal des Ursins	Juvénal des Ursins, Jean. *Histoire de Charles VI, roy de France, et des choses mémorables advenues durant quarante-deux années de son règne: depuis 1380 jusqu'à 1422. Nouvelle collection des mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de France.* Edited by Joseph-François Michaud and Jean-Joseph-François Poujoulat. 3 series. 34 vols. Paris: Ed. du commentaire analytique du code civil, 1836–39.
Louis d'Orléans	Jarry, Eugène. *La Vie politique de Louis de France, duc d'Orléans, 1372–1407*. Paris: A. Picard, 1889.
Monstrelet	Monstrelet, Enguerran de. *La chronique d'Enguerran de Monstrelet, 1400–1444*. Edited by Louis Claude Douët-d'Arcq. 6 vols. Paris: Renouard, 1857–1862.
Pintoin	*Chronique du Religieux de Saint-Denys contenant le règne de Charles VI, de 1380–1422*. Originally published 1844. Edited

	and translated by Louis Bellaguet. 6 vols. Paris: Editions du Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques, 1994.
Plancher	Plancher, Urbain. *Histoire générale et particulière de Bourgogne.* 4 vols. Dijon, France: Imprimerie de A. de Fay, 1739–1781.
Rivalité	Nordberg, Michael. *Les Ducs et la royauté: Etude sur la rivalité des ducs d'Orléans et de Bourgogne 1392–1407.* Uppsala, Sweden: Svenska Bokförlaget, 1964.
Thibault	Thibault, Marcel. *Isabeau de Bavière: Reine de France. La Jeunesse (1370–1405).* Paris: Perrin et Cie, 1903.
Trois vertus	Christine de Pizan. *Le Livre des trois vertus.* Edited by Charity C. Willard and Eric Hicks. Paris: Champion, 1989.

Introduction

1. In 1991, Maureen Quilligan drew attention to the fact that historians recognize that the story of Isabeau's adultery is a fiction in *The Allegory of Female Authority,* 246–47. Quilligan explained that "the rumors about an affair date only from many decades later" (247). Still, the myth of the debauched queen continues to crop up in Christine and other related studies. For post-Quilligan examples, see Jane H. M. Taylor, *The Making of Poetry,* who asserts, without citation, "Isabeau of Bavaria was, according to gossip, thought to be Louis d'Orléans' mistress" (27); Rosalind Brown-Grant, who writes of Christine de Pizan, "It is also possible that she is here making an oblique criticism of Louis d'Orléans, who was rumoured to be having an affair with his sister-in-law, Isabeau de Bavière." Brown-Grant cites Jean Favier's *La Guerre de cent ans,* 415–16. However, on those pages, Favier only asserts without citation that Louis and Isabeau were having an affair. Brown-Grant also cites the passage from Pintoin, discussed in this introduction. Brown-Grant, *Christine de Pizan and the Moral Defence,* 104. The idea of the adulterous Isabeau in Christine studies derives from the influential biography of Charity Cannon Willard, who asserts without footnote that all of Paris knew that Louis and Isabeau were lovers. The "summer of 1405," Willard wrote, "was the time when gossip began to circulate in Paris about the relations between the queen and the duke of Orleans, a liaison that lasted until the duke's assassination in a Paris street near the queen's residence in November 1407." Willard, *Christine de Pizan,* 150.

2. Adams, "Love as Metaphor," 160–61. I describe Christine de Pizan as addressing her pleas to a "capricious mediator who may or may not reward her efforts."

3. Minois, *La Guerre de cent ans,* 270.

4. See Caron, *Noblesse et pouvoir royal,* 188.

5. Tuilier, *Histoire de l'Université de Paris,* 1:186.

6. Poulet, "Capetian Women and the Regency," 115.

7. Guenée, *Un meurtre, une société,* 147–48.

8. *Journal d'un bourgeois de Paris,* 208n7.

9. Erlanger, *Charles VII et son mystère,* 2.

10. Patterson, *Joan of Arc,* 4. The book is a collection of excerpts from John A. Mooney's 1919 biography of Joan of Arc, with a bibliography of recent scholarship.

11. Gordon, *Joan of Arc,* 33.

12. Verdon, *Isabeau de Bavière,* 179.

13. Legrand's most important work, the incomplete *L'Archiloge sophie,* which was intended to set out in twelve books everything that was known of science, was effusively dedicated to Louis of Orleans. See the introduction to Jacques Legrand, *Archiloge sophie, livre de bonnes moeurs.*

14. Pintoin, 3:268.

15. Ibid.

16. Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue,* 42. No twentieth-century historian who has studied the documents associated with the queen (as opposed to those who have simply asserted the charge without citation) has argued for the truthfulness of the charge. See Rachel C. Gibbons' several articles, cited in the bibliography; Straub, "Isabeau de Bavière"; Yann Grandeau's numerous articles, also cited in the bibliography; Kimm, *Isabeau de Baviere;* Bonenfant, *Du meurtre de Montereau;* and Champion, *Vie de Charles d'Orléans,* 41.

17. Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue,* 43.

18. On *soi-disant* as an insult see Gibbons, "Isabeau of Bavaria," 70. See also *Charles VI,* 588–89. Marina Warner shows the falseness of the story of Charles VII's supposed illegitimacy in her *Joan of Arc,* 57–59.

19. Cosneau, *Les Grands traités,* 113.

20. Pintoin, 6:886.

21. "Le Dauphin Jean," 667.

22. *Royal Intrigue.* See also Familiglietti, "The French Monarchy Crisis."

23. Gibbons, "Isabeau of Bavaria," x. I would also like to acknowledge Karen Green's "Isabeau de Bavière and the Political Philosophy of Christine de Pizan." Although this article appeared after I had already completed most of the research for this study, it reinforces many of my own conclusions.

24. Schechter, "Gothic Thermidor," 88.

25. See Sutherland, "Catherine de Medici"; Knecht, "Catherine de Médicis," 1–16; and Crawford, "Catherine de Médicis."

26. See, for example, Weber, *Queen of Fashion;* Kaiser, "Who's Afraid of Marie-Antoinette?"; and Goodman, *Marie-Antoinette.*

27. See Maurer, *Margaret of Anjou,* esp. 1–13 and 127–42. Patricia-Ann Lee offers a somewhat different view of Margaret's mediation and a review of the chronicles, many of which describe the queen as an extremely active political figure in "Reflections of Power: Margaret of Anjou and the Dark Side of Queenship."

28. Even the revered Queen Blanche of Castile was rumored to have had affairs. See Berger, *Histoire de Blanche de Castille,* 82–83.

29. For discussions of the queen's role as mediator or intercessor, see Maurer, *Margaret of Anjou,* 1–13; Parsons, "Intercessionary Patronage" and "The Queen's Intercession"; Huneycutt, "Intercession and the High-Medieval Queen," 126–46; Strohm's chapter "Queens as Intercessors," in his *Hochon's Arrow,* 95–120. See also Fradenburg's "Introduction: Rethinking Queenship."

30. See Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland;* Cosandey, *La Reine de France* and "De Lance en quenouille"; Howell, *Eleanor of Provence;* Parsons, *"Of Queens, Courts, and Books,"* and *Eleanor of Castile,* and "Mothers, Daughters, Marriage, Power."

31. Fradenburg, "Introduction: Rethinking Queenship," 5.

32. This is especially noticeable in Thibault. But see also Vallet de Viriville, *Isabeau de Bavière.*

33. Mooney, "Queenship in Fifteenth Century France," 20.

34. See Famiglietti, for example, Solterer, "Making Names, Breaking Lives."

35. See *Royal Intrigue,* 42–43; Gibbons, "Isabeau of Bavaria," 62–63; and Straub, "Isabeau de Bavière," 134.

36. A second chronicle, attributed to Juvénal des Ursins, offers one negative passage about the queen, but up until the year 1411, according to Peter Lewis, or 1413, according to René Planchenault, this chronicle is largely an abridged translation of that of Pintoin. Most important, the negative passage is clearly an abridged translation of one of the four negative passages in Pintoin. Thus it cannot be taken as independent corroboration. See P. S. Lewis, *Écrits politiques,* 1:88, and Planchenault, "La 'Chronique de la Pucelle,'" 95. We are left, then, with a single chronicler reporting that the queen was unpopular. Although the work attributed to Jean Juvénal des Ursins was almost certainly not written by him, I will nonetheless refer to it as the chronicle of Juvénal des Ursins, because it is widely known under this title.

37. Mirot, "L'Enlèvement du dauphin."

38. Barry, *La Reine de France,* 308.

39. Pintoin, 6:432.

40. See Mark Warner, "The Anglo-French Dual Monarchy"; and Curry, "La Traité de Troyes," 13–26.

41. See Schnerb, *Jean sans Peur,* 642.

42. I have examined all the documents cited in this study but have cited in each case the secondary sources in which I found the references.

43. Spiegel, *The Past as Text,* 55.

Chapter One: Isabeau of Bavaria: Her Life

Epigraph. See Carroll, *Blood and Violence,* 7.

1. For a discussion of feuding and its use in recent scholarship, see Pollack-Lagushenko, "The Armagnac Faction," 1–94. Also relevant to the discussion of in-

tegrative factionalism are studies of individual households and their clienteles. For the Duke of Orleans, see Gonzalez, *Un Prince en son hôtel;* for the Dukes of Burgundy, see Schnerb, *Etat bourguignon;* for the Dukes of Bourbon, see Mattéoni, *Servir le prince.*

2. The schema of Isabeau's career is my own. However, the information for the chapter was drawn from a range of excellent histories available on the period, including *Rivalité,* Vaughan, *Philip the Bold* and *John the Fearless,* Autrand, *Charles VI,* and Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue.* My presentation of the period differs in seeking to understand the place of Isabeau throughout, something that is of minor or no interest to these studies.

3. Isabel was a French form of Elisabeth, and Isabeau was a common variation of Isabel. Although she designated herself Isabel or Ysabel, the queen is referred to by both forms in different sources. For example, she is called "La Reyne Ysabeau" in the inventory of the royal treasury of 1438. See Alcouffe, "Gemmes anciennes." It has been suggested that referring to the queen as Ysabeau, as does the "Songe véritable," was intended to insult. However, the form is so common that it is difficult to see why its use would have been injurious.

4. See Thibault, 203.

5. See Straub, *Herzog Ludwig,* 21.

6. Froissart, 10:346–47.

7. The marriage between Anne of Bohemia and Richard II was contracted on September 1, 1380, just before the death of King Charles V on September 16, although not performed until 1382. On the negotiations surrounding the marriage, see Tuck, "Richard II and the House of Luxembourg," 205–29.

8. Froissart, 10:344. The alliance of these two pro-Roman powers was a serious threat to Charles V, who supported the Avignon pope. See Valois, *La France et le grand schisme,* 1:300–2.

9. See Vaughan, *Philip the Bold,* 11, and Straub, *Herzog Ludwig,* 1. William V was the grandson of Isabeau's great-grandfather, Holy Roman Emperor Louis IV of Bavaria, and thus a cousin of Isabeau's father.

10. See Thibault, 38.

11. The standard text for French-Italian relations is Bueno de Mesquita. But see also Jarry, "La 'Voie de fait'"; and *Rivalité,* 76–110. These works offer somewhat different interpretations of the documents.

12. See Bueno de Mesquita, 31–34.

13. Bueno de Mesquita, 12.

14. See Straub, *Herzog Ludwig,* 1–4.

15. See Froissart, 10:344–47.

16. Autrand, *Charles VI,* 145–49.

17. Straub, *Herzog Ludwig,* 4–5.

18. See Bueno de Mesquita. "Louis, with the strength of France behind him, could

safeguard the Milanese state, and by the natural development of his own ambitions would keep the Piedmontese princes fully occupied. He would be the instrument of Visconti policy in Piedmont, holding the important Genoese passes open for Giangaleazzo" (67).

19. Jarry, "La 'Voie de fait,'" 217.

20. Ibid., 218.

21. On French policy toward the Schism, see Kaminsky, "The Politics of France's Subtraction of Obedience," 366–97.

22. Bueno de Mesquita explains that during marriage negotiations, Giangaleazzo had given verbal assurance that he would support the French Church policy (64).

23. See the letter sent by Carlo Visconti announcing his safe arrival at the court in Ingolstadt, printed in Simonsfeld, "Beiträge zur Bayersichen," 302; see also Straub, *Herzog Ludwig,* 5.

24. Bueno de Mesquita, 63.

25. See Straub, *Herzog Ludwig,* 7.

26. See *Louis d'Orléans,* 64. The document with instructions on how to approach Isabeau can be found in Bibliothèque Nationale française (BN) fonds italien 1682, f. 23. See Bueno de Mesquita, 118–24, on the Florentine envoy. Desjardins and Canestrini publish a summary of the envoy's instructions but do not mention Isabeau; *Négociations diplomatiques,* 1:29.

27. Bueno de Mesquita, 107–10; Straub, *Herzog Ludwig,* 5–6.

28. See Bueno de Mesquita, 107.

29. Jarry, "La 'Voie de fait,'" 223.

30. Ibid., 224.

31. Ibid., 240–45. Pintoin mentions the three-year truce with the king of England, 2:130. The final result of the rapprochement was the marriage between Richard II of England and the daughter of Charles and Isabeau, Isabelle, in 1396. See Pintoin, 2:456–62.

32. *Rivalité,* 76–110.

33. Bueno de Mesquita, 188.

34. Pintoin describes the incident, 2:404–6, as does Froissart, 15:352–55. For the date of Valentina's departure, see *Louis d'Orléans,* 168, and Collas, *Valentine de Milan,* 219–27. Giangaleazzo sent ambassadors to the French court to intervene on his daughter's behalf, but to no avail. Froissart, 15:354. The matter of witchcraft is taken very seriously by Pintoin. Although he does not believe Valentina guilty of casting spells on the king, he describes the energy expended on trying cure the king in the years leading up to Valentina's expulsion. See 2:24, 2:86–94, 2:542–46, and 3:114–16. The dukes of Orleans and Burgundy accused each other of casting malevolent spells on on the king. See Boudet, "Les Condamnations." In 1398, the University of Paris condemned magic for any purpose, good or evil; Boudet, "Les Condamnations," 121.

35. Pintoin, 2:464–66.

36. See the account of the ambassador, Buonaccorso Pitti, in *Two Memoirs,* 54–55. Michael Nordberg, in *Rivalité,* 96–102, argues convincingly that the treaty of Florence against Milan was due to the intervention of Isabeau alone. See also *Louis d'Orléans,* 167. Certainly Pitti's memoir gives the impression that this was the case.

37. See Valois, *La France et le grand schisme,* 2:155. Papal bulls of November 6 and 7, 1389, grant Isabeau the right to name sixty clerical benefices; others are granted to the king, to Louis of Orleans, and to the king's maternal uncle, Louis of Bourbon.

38. Straub, *Herzog Ludwig,* 13, 22–23.

39. "Active Queenship," 75. Gibbons cites Archives Nationales (AN) Series KK 45, f. 3–5.

40. See *Rivalité,* 152–53.

41. Regarding the Bavarian attitude toward Wenscelas, see Straub, *Herzog Ludwig,* 14. Ruprecht solicited Isabeau regularly for support. See Weizsäcker, *Deutsche Reichstagsakten,* 4:162, no. 113; 4:163–64, no. 116; 4:198–99, no. 157; 4:285, no. 208; 4:337–38, no. 255; 4:391–92, no. 289; and 4:394, no. 290.

42. See Carroll, *Blood and Violence,* 223.

43. See Cosandey, *La Reine de France,* 131–32.

44. For Madame de la Rivière, see Grandeau, "Les Dames." Grandeau also notes that Isabeau supported the careers of her sons. For Olivier de Clisson, see Thibault, 276.

45. Thibault, 272.

46. Ibid., 346.

47. Ibid., 360. See the record of the event in Douët-d'Arcq, *Comptes de l'Hôtel,* 170–71.

48. Douët-d'Arcq, *Choix de pièces inédites,* 1:205.

49. See Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue,* 29n58.

50. Henneman, *Olivier de Clisson,* 131.

51. Ibid., 129.

52. Ibid., 131.

53. Carroll, *Blood and Violence,* 9. Guy Halsall discusses and defines feuding in "Violence and Society," 1–45; see esp. 19–35.

54. Carroll, *Blood and Violence,* 11.

55. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre des fais,* 145.

56. On how the dukes held their lands, see *Rivalité,* 4–38. The king was not the only "prince."

57. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre du corps de policie,* 14, lines 12–23.

58. R. C. Famiglietti argues, in *Royal Intrigue,* that Charles VI's insanity was directly responsible for the feud, as does, more recently, Sizer in "Making Revolution

Medieval." The best-known proponent of the view that the feud was the inevitable result of factionalism is Cazelles, *La Société politique*.

59. Autrand, *Charles VI,* 20–21.

60. See *Ordonnances* 6, 45–49.

61. See Radding, "The Estates of Normandy," 80. Why did the king eliminate the *fouage*? Did he believe that it was no longer necessary because the kingdom was in good order? Or was he worried that his brothers would attempt to expand their empires at the expense of the French? See also Miskimin, "The Last Act of Charles V." But it seems hard to believe that Charles V did not support Louis of Anjou's incursions into Italy, for Charles supported Pope Clement VII, who on accession in 1379 infeudated Adria, the territories north of Rome, to Anjou. See Jarry, "La 'Voie de fait.'"

62. *Charles VI,* 3–4. Cohn, *Lust for Liberty,* 74, and *Popular Protest,* 261–62.

63. On the reasons for the revolts see Radding, "The Estates of Normandy."

64. Demurger, *Temps de crises,* 88. On the marmousets' agenda, see *Charles VI,* 205–13. For a less glowing assessment, see Sizer, "Making Revolution Medieval," 368–74.

65. Demurger, *Temps de crises,* 82

66. *Charles VI,* 205–13, and Sizer, "Making Revolution Medieval," 369–74.

67. Demurger, *Temps de crises,* 83.

68. See Lehoux, *Jean de France,* 2:292–93, for a description of the chaos that followed Philip's assumption of power.

> Parmi les conseillers les plus en vue, ce fut un sauve-qui-peut général: Clisson était immédiatement parti pour Josselin, Jean le Mercier pour le Dauphiné, et Bureau de la Rivière pour son château d'Auneau, tandis que Jean de Montaigu et le Bègue de Villaines se réfugiaient, l'un auprès du pape d'Avignon, l'autre en Castille. Aucun d'eux, néanmoins, ne put échapper aux poursuites et tous furent condamnés. Le 19 décembre, Clisson, banni du royaume, était frappé d'une amende de 10.000 francs et déchu de ses fonctions; le connétable passait au comte d'Eu, Philippe d'Artois, futur gendre du duc de Berri. La Rivière et Jean le Mercier, condamnés également, après avoir été incarcérés à la Bastille Saint-Antoine, ne bénéficièrent d'une relative clémence que grâce à l'intervention de la jeune duchesse de Berri; et si Montaigu et le Bègue de Villaines devaient, dans l'avenir, reparaître au Conseil, ils n'y occuperaient jamais plus une place prépondérante.
>
> [Among the most visible counselors, it was each man for himself: Clisson left immediately for Josselin, Jean le Mercier for the Dauphiné, and Bureau de la Rivière for his chateau d'Auneau, while Jean de Montaigu and le Bègue de Villaines found refuge, one with the Pope in Avignon, the other in Castile. None of them, however, could escape the fall-out and all were condemned.

On December 19, Clisson, banished from the kingdom, was struck with a fine of 10,000 francs and relieved of his functions; Philip of Artois, Count of Eu and future son-in-law of the Duke of Berry, was named constable. La Rivière and Jean le Mercier [Seigneur of Nouvion or Noviant], also condemned, after being incarcerated in the Bastille Saint-Antoine, enjoyed relative clemency thanks to the intervention of the young Duchess of Berry; and if Montaigu and le Bègue de Villaines returned to the Council, they never again occupied an influential position.]

69. Froissart recounts the story of Philip's coup, 3:164.

70. See *Rivalité,* 95.

71. Demurger, *Temps de crises,* 87.

72. See *Rivalité,* 12–23.

73. See Kaminsky, "The Politics of France's Subtraction," 366–67.

74. Autrand, *Charles VI,* 200.

75. See *Rivalité,* 162–84.

76. Vaughan, *Philip the Bold,* 99.

77. Ibid., 104.

78. Henneman, *Clisson,* 183–84.

79. See Rey, *Le Domaine du roi,* 327.

80. See *Rivalité,* 57

81. Lehoux, *Jean de France,* 2:461n5.

82. Halsall, "Violence and Society," 23.

83. Thibault cites the document from the National Archives describing the situation, AN Series J 359, no. 23.

84. Douët-d'Arcq, *Choix de pièces inédites,* 1:220–26.

85. Pintoin, 3:116–18.

86. Thibault, *Isabeau de Bavière,* 301

87. It is important to note that throughout I refer to Charles as if he were an independent agent during his periods of sanity. However, it is not well-understood to what extent the king was ever capable of thinking fully for himself after the initial onset of his mental illness. His ordinances may have been produced entirely by his counselors.

88. See O*rdonnances,* 7:518–22.

89. Ibid., 7:530–35.

90. Ibid., 7:535–38. This ordinance was overridden by one of 1403 that stipulated a ruling college composed of the queen, the dukes, princes of the blood, and councillors to govern during a minority. See *Ordonnances,* 8:581–83.

91. Douët-d'Arcq, *Choix de pièces inédites,* 1:227–39.

92. Ibid. 1:240–43.

93. See O*rdonnances,* 8:581–83.

94. See Vaughan, *Philip the Bold,* 40–41. The Duke of Berry had always taken a

back seat to his older brother. Nothing indicates that he was interested in asserting himself on Philip's death.

95. Although Jean sans Peur did not receive the nickname by which he is commonly known until 1413 with the battle of Othea. See Monstrelet, 1:371 and 389.

96. For the Duke of Burgundy's relationship with the university, see Tournier, "Jean sans Peur," 299–318.

97. Bernard Guenée has argued that the Valois kings calculated noble status as a function of proximity of relation to the king. Thus Louis, the king's brother, far outranked Jean, his cousin. See Guenée, "Le Roi, ses parents et son royaume."

98. See Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue,* 40.

> To these ends, she would use all her power against everyone except the king, her children, and all those to whom by "reason and honesty" she was more obliged because they were more closely related to her than John was. In other words, she would be unable to help John against the duke of Orléans, since, as her brother-in-law, he was more closely related to her, and she would be unable to help him against such personages as the king's uncles, the dukes of Berry and Bourbon. Isabeau was also implying to Duke John that the interests of her brother, Louis of Bavaria, would necessarily receive more support from her than would his own.

This treaty can be usefully compared with one signed by Charles of Orleans with Bernard of Armagnac on October 24, 1409, for it uses a similar structure. Charles of Orleans promises to serve Bernard of Armagnac against everyone but the king, the queen, and the Duke of Guyenne. See AN Series K 56, no. 257.

99. See, for example, Henneman, *Royal Taxation in Fourteenth Century France: The Development of War Financing, 1322–1356* and *Royal Taxation in Fourteenth Century France: The Captivity and Ransom of John II, 1356–1370;* Rey, *Domaine du roi and les finances royales.*

100. Wolfe, "*French Views on Wealth,*" 467.

101. Pintoin, 3:738.

102. Vaughan, *John the Fearless,* 47.

103. *Ordonnances,* 9:267–69, here 268.

104. Ibid., 268

105. See *Royal Intrigue,* where Famiglietti argues the existence of such an ordinance based on Juvénal des Ursins, 66.

106. *Ordonnances,* 8:578.

107. See *Royal Intrigue,* 66; for the *étrenne,* see Hirschbiegel, *Etrennes,* 465.

108. Printed in *Ordonnances* 9:279–89.

109. Ibid., 287.

110. Pollack-Lagushenko, "The Armagnac Faction," 236.

111. Ibid., 239.

112. Ibid., 236–37.

113. Printed in Plancher 3, no. 256.

114. Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue,* 67.

115. Pintoin, 3:766

116. Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue,* 69.

117. See Bernier, *Histoire de Blois,* preuves, 133.

118. Printed in Bernier, *Histoire de Blois,* 32.

119. Ibid.

120. Monstrelet, 1:267.

121. Juvénal des Ursins, 447. Pintoin makes the powers granted to the queen—and to the dauphin, jointly—sound more extensive. See 4:90.

122. See Juvénal des Ursins, 449.

123. Printed in *Ordonnances,* 12:227–29, here 228.

124. Ibid., 12:228.

125. Vaughan, *John the Fearless,* 74–75.

126. See *John the Fearless,* 75–76, for a translation of part of the letter in which Pons de Perellos refers to Isabeau's state of mind at the time. For the original, see Calmette, "Contribution à l'histoire des relations."

127. On the Peace of Chartres, see Mirot, "Autour de la Paix de Chartres"; Vaughan, *John the Fearless,* 75–78; Autrand, *Charles VI,* 435–37; *Journal d'un bourgeois de Paris,* 32.

128. Guenée, *Un meurtre, une société,* 186.

129. As Halsall concludes in "Violence and Society," 19–32.

130. See Pintoin, 4:272–73.

131. The document awarding the *tutelle* to the Duke of Burgundy is printed in Plancher, 3:261.

> Comme aprez ce que nostre trez chiere & trez amée compaigne la Royne, nous ait aujourd'huy remonstré en la presence de plusieurs de nostre Sang & lignaige, comment par nostre ordonnancce & commandement elle a gardé & nourry par un long temps nostre trez chier & trez amé ainsné fils Loys Duc de Guyenne, Daulphin de Viennois, & d'ycellui eu la garde & gouvernement, l'a gardé, eslevé & gouverné tant & si longuement qu'il est grant & en tel aage qu'il appartient que d'oresnavant il apprengne à coungoistre les Gens de tous estats de nostre Royaume, & les besoignes & affaires d'ycellui, & que nostredite compaigne considerant la pesanteur d'elle, & les occupations qui souvent luy aviennent & peuvent avenir, tant pour cause du grant nombre d'enfants qu'il a pleu à Nostre Seigneur nous donner, & qu'elle a porté, comme autrement obstant lesquelx elle ne pourroit tousjours d'oresnavant estre presente ez lieux necessaires, lesquelx pour la perfection & deuë introduction de nostredit fils, il seroit besoing & expedient d'estre; et desirant de tout son cueur son bien & avancement.

[In response to the statement of our very dear and much loved companion, the Queen, that by our ordinance she has long watched over and raised our very dear and much loved oldest son, Louis, Duke of Guyenne, Dauphin of the Viennois, and has had guardianship and government over him, and kept him and raised him and watched over him to the point where he is grown to such an age that it is fitting that from now on he learn to know people of all the estates of the realm, and the tasks and affairs of it, and because our said companion, considering her illness and the problems that she often has and will continue to have, because of the great number of children it has pleased the Lord to send us, and which she carried, as well as the fact that she cannot always from now on be present in the places in which she needs to be for the final training and introduction of our son, whose good and advancement she desires with all her heart.]

132. Straub, *Herzog Ludwig,* 101. See also *Royal Intrigue,* 83–84.

133. See Vaughan, *John the Fearless,* 82–83; *Royal Intrigue,* 88–89.

134. Monstrelet, 2:91–92.

135. Pintoin, 372.

136. On the futility of the Peace of Bicêtre see D'Avout, *La Querelle des Armagnacs,* 82–84.

137. For the first accusation see Juvénal des Ursins, 467. For the others see Monstrelet, 2:241–42.

138. See Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue,* and "The French Monarchy Crisis." Gibbons offers an excellent chapter on the relationship between Isabeau and Louis during this time, in "Active Queenship," 206–48. See also Demurger, *Temps de crises,* 98–100.

139. See Plancher, 3:287.

140. Christine de Pizan, *Livre de paix,* 200–201.

141. Ibid, translation 58, 200.

142. D'Avout, *La Querelle des Armagnacs,* 158.

143. Vaughan, *John the Fearless,* 138.

144. On the historical context of the work, see Karen Green's introduction to the English edition of *Livre de paix,* translation 65, 206.

145. Christine de Pizan, *Livre de la Paix,* 63.

146. See Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue,* 80.

147. Monstrelet, 2:334.

148. According to Monstrelet, both Isabeau and Jean sans Peur attempted to soothe the dauphin, 2:334; Juvénal des Ursins reports that Isabeau engaged Jean de Vailly for the dauphin at the suggestion of her brother, 480.

149. Monstrelet, 2:335.

150. See Coville, *Les Cabochiens,* 103.

151. Ibid., 105.

152. Juvénal des Ursins, 467.

153. McGuire, *Jean Gerson,* 201.

154. Pintoin, 5:130, and Coville, *Les Cabochiens,* 109.

155. Pintoin, 5:130.

156. On the dauphin's troubled relationship with the Armagnacs, see Mirot, "Autour de la paix d'Arras," 272–73.

157. Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue,* 137.

158. *Journal d'un bourgeois,* 71.

159. Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue,* 138.

160. See Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue,* 138–39.

161. Vaughan, *John the Fearless,* 205.

162. See Pintoin, 5:586–90.

163. On this period, see "Le Dauphin Jean."

164. "Le Dauphin Jean," 682–84; Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue,* 175–77.

165. Pintoin, 6:52.

166. On attitudes toward Bernard of Armagnac, see *Journal d'un bourgeois,* 112.

167. Pintoin, 6:50.

168. "Le Dauphin Jean," 710-12; Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue,* 176–77.

169. The story is reminiscent of that of the queen's contemporary, Jeanne of Navarre, one-time Duchess of Brittany who became queen of Henry IV. After the death of the king, she was charged with witchcraft and having "imagined the death of the king." According to Henry V, her dower was too great an expense at a time when he needed the funds to conquer France. See Strohm, *England's Empty Throne,* 163–66.

170. Pintoin, 6:80.

171. Monstrelet, 3:227–28.

172. Pintoin, 6:138–40.

173. Published in Plancher, 3:302, and *Ordonnances* 10:436–43.

174. Pintoin, 6:253.

175. See "Entrée de la Reine Isabeau," 105.

176. Juvénal des Ursins, 548.

177. Fresne de Beaucourt, *Histoire de Charles VII,* 1:43–44.

178. See Pintoin, 6:382–84, who describes the king's displeasure and the public censures of Charles's actions.

179. Allmand, *The Hundred Years War,* 29.

180. Bonenfant, *Du meurtre de Montereau,* 121.

181. Mark Warner, "The Anglo-French Dual Monarchy," 204.

182. On this period see Grandeau, "Les Dernières Années."

183. Ibid., 413.

184. *Journal d'un bourgeois,* 208.

185. See Grandeau, "Les Dames," 212–17.

186. See Grandeau, "Les Dernières Années," 414.

187. Pons, "Intellectual Patterns," 55.

Chapter Two: Isabeau of Bavaria: Her Afterlife

Epigraph. Sellers, "The Lurid Career," 55.

1. Nora, *Realms of Memory,* 1:1. Isabeau does not figure in Nora's work.

2. See the review article by Tai, "Remembered Realms."

> Today, viewers look at religious paintings of the Renaissance as desacralized objects of beauty. But as Yates showed in *The Art of Memory,* at the time they were painted, they were mnemonic devices that drew on viewers' familiarity with biblical stories and at the same time reinforced their recollection of these stories: they were sites that both were saturated with memory and worked to promote memory. In the Renaissance, then, one may claim that *lieux* and *milieux* coexisted and reinforced each other. The same can be said about Verdun. Proust laments that, with the passing away of veterans of the Great War, Verdun will lose its potency as a site of memory. Until then, it will be a *lieu de mémoire* because there still is a *milieu de mémoire*. . . . As William Faulkner wrote in *Requiem for a Nun,* "In the South, the past is never dead. It's not even past."

3. Kelley, "Jean du Tillet," 339.

4. See Gilli, "L'Epopée de Jeanne d'Arc," 11

5. Brandon, "Chroniques des religieux des Dunes," 1:110.

6. Ibid.

7. See Wood, *Joan of Arc and Richard III,* 125–51. On the "affair" rumor, see Famiglietti, 42–45, and Gibbons, "Isabeau of Bavaria," 62–67.

8. Chartier, *Chronique de Charles VII,* 1:viii and 1:209.

9. Chartier, *Chronique de Charles VII,* 1:209–10.

10. Bonenfant, *Du meurtre de Montereau,* 133.

11. See the document in Chaplais, *English Medieval Diplomatic Practice,* 1:648–52.

12. See Craig Taylor, "Sir John Fortescue," 113–14. On Richard II, Strohm, *England's Empty Throne,* 23–25.

13. Basin, *Histoire de Charles VII,* 1:132.

14. *Le Pastoralet.* For an example of how the *Pastoralet* has been read as evidence of a liaison, see Coville, *Les Cabochiens,* 22n7. "L'argument le plus sérieux que l'on pourrait invoquer pour prouver la liaison du duc d'Orléans et de la reine est ce passage du *Pastoralet.*" (The most serious argument in favor of a liaison between the Duke of Orleans and the queen is the passage in the *Pastoralet.*)

15. *Metzer Chronik,* 362.

16. Ibid., 496.

17. *Metzer Chronik,* 357.

Lequeil n'y mourit point; dont moult de mal en vinssent en France. Car il tuait le duc Loys d'Orliens per MCCCC et VII et lui meysme en fuit mors et tues per XVIIII per les amis dudit duc d'Orliens, dont main grans malz s'en sunt ensuis et advenus on reaumme de France; et valcist muez qu'il n'eust onque estez nes que lez malz qui en sont estez advenus.
[Who did not die; for which cause much woe came to France. For he killed Louis the Duke of Orleans in 1407, and he himself was killed in 1419 by the friends of the Duke of Orleans, which caused much trouble to pass in the realm of France, and it would have been better had he never been born for all the trouble that he caused.]

18. Chastellain, *Œuvres,* 1:50–51.
19. Gilles, *Les Annales,* 1:211.
20. Gaguin, *Sommaire historial,* 211.
21. Piccolomini, *De Viris Illustribus,* 134.
22. Piccolomini, *Commentarii,* 1:1084–85.
23. Brachet, *Pathologie mentale,* 82.
24. Thomas, "Le 'Signe royal.'"
25. Brantôme, *Œuvres complètes,* 3:80–81.
26. Ibid., 10:219.
27. Beaune, *Naissance,* 220.
28. Testimony of Durandus Laxart in article 10, "Item, inquiratur de modo recessus a patria, et progressus per viam," Duparc, *Procès en nullité,* 1:251.
29. Duparc, *Procès en nullité,* 1:296.
30. France, *The Life of Joan of Arc,* 1:59–60.
31. See, for example, "Sur le carème," by Deschamps, 1392. Deschamps refers to Eve, who brought about "nostre perdicion," and Marie, "nostre recouvrement," without inserting any contemporary figures into the binary. In Deschamps, *Oeuvres complètes,* 3:79–81, here 79, lines 21–22.
32. Fraioli, "Literary Image of Joan of Arc," 825. See also Gambero, *Mary and the Fathers of the Church,* 47.
33. Fraioli, "Literary Image of Joan of Arc," 821–22nn46–47.
34. Brown, "Allegorical Design," 393.
35. Astell, "The Virgin Mary," 43.
36. Available at www.stejeannedarc.net/chroniques/clerc_spire.php#notes.
37. Barry, *La Reine de France,* 308.
38. See Kelley, "Jean du Tillet," 43.
39. Du Tillet, *Pour l'Entiere majorité.*
40. Ibid., f. 501.
41. Ibid., verso.

42. Du Tillet, *Les Mémoires,* 125–26.

43. Choppin, *Trois livres,* 403.

44. See *Ordonnances,* 11:375. Philip stipulates that Jeanne will have regency of the realm and *tutelle* of the heir to the throne: "Regni regimen, administrationem & curam, nec non praefati primogeniti nostri tutelam habeat, moderetur & exerceat."

45. Choppin, *Trois livres,* 405.

46. Dupuy, *Traité de la majorité,* 83–93.

47. Du Haillan, *L'Histoire de France,* 2.

48. Ibid., 38.

49. Ibid., 84–85.

50. Ibid., 140–41.

51. Ibid., 118.

52. Kaminsky, "The Noble Feud," 83. For more on the subject of attutides toward feuding in the sixteenth century, see Carroll, *Blood and Violence,* who writes that "what happened in early modern France was not the pacification of a warrior class into factions of intriguing courtiers, but the more systematic redeployment of those whose profession was arms, who claimed the right to violence, in the service of the monarchy" (332). See also Bartlett, *Mortal Enmities.*

53. Hotman, *Francogallia.*

54. Ibid., 494, translation 495.

55. Ibid.

56. Du Bosc de Montandré, *La Regence des Reynes.* The work has been attributed to both Du Bosc de Montandré and Luyt.

57. Ibid., no pagination, introduction.

58. Du Bosc de Montandré, *La Regence des Reynes,* 8.

59. Ibid., 56.

60. Quoted in Straub, "Isabeau de Bavière," 132–33.

61. Quoted in Piaget, "Un manuscrit de la *Cour amoureuse,*" 418.

62. Ibid., 419.

63. Keralio, *Les Crimes des reines.*

64. Ibid., 118

65. Ibid., 139.

66. Ibid., 143.

67. See Schaeffer, *The Marquis de Sade,* 505–6. See also Pauvert's introduction to vol. 12 of the complete works, *Œuvres complètes du marquis de Sade.*

68. Sade, *Histoire secrète d'Isabelle de Bavière,* 26.

69. Michelet, *Histoire de France,* 5:159–60.

70. Ibid., 5:161.

71. Ibid., 5:185.

72. Ibid.

73. Guizot, *L'Histoire de France,* 2:234.

74. Ibid., 2:261–62.
75. Martin, *Histoire de France,* 1:427.
76. Ibid.
77. Ibid., 1:448.
78. Ibid., 1:456.
79. Coville, *Les Cabochiens,* 21.
80. Ibid., 21–22.
81. Ibid., 22n7.
82. Thibault, 207.
83. Ibid., 242.
84. Ibid., 311.
85. Ibid., 298.
86. Ibid., 373.
87. Ibid., 420.
88. Ibid., 425.
89. Ibid., 424.
90. Ibid., 315.
91. See Hunt, "Many Bodies of Marie-Antoinette," 108–30.
92. Thibault, 107.
93. Guenée, *Un meurtre, une société,* 147–48.
94. Tuchman, *A Distant Mirror,* 515. For more imagery of Isabeau in the popular imagination, see, for example, Plaidy's *Epitaph for Three Women,* a historical romance about Joan of Arc. Here Isabeau's son, the dauphin Charles is depicted as anxious about his paternity and Isabeau herself as promiscuous and a bad mother:

> Charles was unsure whether he would live through one day to the next; he was unsure of those about him; he lived in fear of what awful fate might overtake him; but what he was most unsure of was whether he was his father's son. He had been so ever since his mother—surely the most wicked Queen France had ever known—had told him that he was a bastard. . . . His life had been haunted by that fear. Had he no right to the throne of France? The King had been mad, passing clouded years of his life in the Hôtel de St Pol. The fertile Queen had taken a succession of lovers. How could any of her children be sure who their father was? Moreover, she seemed to hate her children—not all the time, for when she had seen a chance of marrying Katherine to the King of England she had seemed positively to love the girl. When the Dauphin's two elder brothers had died mysteriously it was thought that the Queen wanted the crown for her youngest son. But she turned against him, and had taunted him with the doubt which had haunted him ever since. (186)

Marcantel's *An Army of Angels* makes the same allegation although in less scandalized tones: "While the English and their ally, the traitorous duc de Bourgogne,

schemed to divide the fractured realm further, the Dauphin Charles lived in exile from Paris, rejected by his mother and deprived of his place as the rightful ruler of the kingdom. In a pact with the *goddon* devils, the Queen Mother had declared her son a bastard and enticed the witless King to leave his throne to Henry V of England" (38). One particularly fantastical and yet long-held myth claims that Joan of Arc was actually the daughter of Louis of Orleans and Isabeau. Sermoise makes the case for Joan's royal parentage in *Joan of Arc and Her Secret Missions*. Marina Warner notes the persistence of this myth in *Joan of Arc,* 59.

Chapter Three: Isabeau Mediatrix

1. See Fradenburg's "Introduction: Rethinking Queenship," 5.

2. See Wisman's edition of "The Epistle of the Prison of Human Life," 76, in which Christine explains that it is fitting that a princess be a "moyennerresse de traictié de paix" (mediator of a peace treaty). Christine refers to the princess as *moyenne de paix* at numerous points in the *Trois vertus*.

3. Facinger, "A Study of Medieval Queenship," 3–48.

4. Ibid., 39.

5. Ibid., 40.

6. Ibid.

7. Strohm, *Hochon's Arrow,* 96.

8. In response to Marion F. Facinger's seminal article, which argued that queens had seen their power diminish to the merely ritualistic by 1230, many historians have made the case that they continued to influence by indirect but effective means. See, for example, the articles of Fradenburg's *Women and Sovereignty;* Parsons's *Medieval Queenship;* and Nolan's *Capetian Women,* esp. Shadis, "Blanche of Castile," 137–61.

9. Baldwin, *The Government of Philip Augustus,* esp. chap. 6, "The King's New Men," 101–36.

10. Baldwin, *The Government of Philip Augustus,* 106.

11. On Isabelle of Hainaut, see Baldwin, *The Government of Philip Augustus,* 80-86, and Hornady, "Capetian Queen as Street Demonstrator, 77–98. On Ingeborg, see Baldwin, *The Government of Philip Augustus,* 206–7, and Showalter, "The Ingeborg Psalter," 99–136.

12. See Berger, *Histoire de Blanche de Castile,* 60.

13. Printed in Heckmann, *Stellvertreter,* 2:735–36.

14. See Shadis, "Blanche of Castille," 142.

15. See Sivéry, *Blanche de Castile,* 95.

16. Heckmann, *Stellvertreter,* 1:79–85.

17. See *Ordonnances,* 12:45–46.

18. *Ordonnances,* 6:49.

19. On the burgeoning of Mariology, see Marina Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex;* Gold, *The Lady and the Virgin;* and Pelikan, *Mary through the Centuries.*

20. Parsons, "The Pregnant Queen as Counsellor," 40.

21. See Kipling, *Enter the King,* 289–356, on the symbolism of the queen's entrance. It should be noted that the influence between the earthly and heavenly registers was mutual. The Church depicted the Virgin Mary in the characteristic clothing of the twelfth-century queen, costume by which we recognize her still today, to augment her prestige. Cosandey writes:

> C'est alors à la reine que furent empruntés les attributs de la majesté divine. Quel modèle pouvait mieux illustrer la supériorité et la perfection de la plus sainte des femmes du Nouveau Testament que celui de la plus noble et de la plus glorieuse des femmes de ce monde? Princesse élevée au sommet de la hiérarchie sociale, la reine apparaissait comme la référence la mieux adaptée à l'image que l'Eglise voulait donner de Marie.
> [It was thus from the queen that the attributes of divine majesty were borrowed. What model could better illustrate the superiority and perfection of the holiest of women of the New Testament than that of the noblest and most glorious of the women of this world? Princess elevated to the summit of the social hierarchy, the queen seemed be to the reference best adapted to the image that the Church wished to give Marie.] *La Reine de France,* 279.

22. Jackson, *Ordines coronationis Franciae,* 2:511.

23. De Mérindol, "La Femme et la paix, 204.

24. Huneycutt, "Intercession and the High-Medieval Queen," 126–46, 130.

25. Zaeske, "Unveiling Esther," 202. For further on Esther, seee Hochner, "Imagining Esther."

26. Zaeske, "Unveiling Esther," 202.

27. Strohm, *Hochon's Arrow,* 97.

28. De Joinville, *Histoire de Saint Louis,* 24.

29. Fradenburg, "Introduction: Rethinking Queenship," 5.

30. Aram, *Juana the Mad,* 12.

31. See Baldwin, *The Government of Philip Augustus,* 18 and 357.

32. See Pintoin, 5:588. Monstrelet, 3:76, describes ambassadors of the Duke of Burgundy going to see the dauphin in 1415 to request that he renounce his mistress and live again with his wife.

33. See Vaughan, *John the Fearless,* 194.

34. Trois vertus, 32.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid., 35.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid., 34–35.

39. Ibid., 35.

40. Ibid., 55.

41. Ibid., 63.

42. Ibid., 84.

43. See Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre de la mutacion de fortune,* 1:46–53.

44. Earl Jeffrey Richards has written a series of articles exploring how Christine imagines female regency, particularly Isabeau's, through imagery of the Virgin. See "Les Enjeux du culte mariale, 141–66; "Justice in the Summa of St. Thomas Aquinas," 95–114; and "Political Thought as Improvisation, 1–22.

45. Christine de Pizan, *Cité des dames,* 430–32.

46. Richards, "Les Enjeux du culte mariale," 146.

47. On the development of medieval diplomacy, see Queller, *The Office of Ambassador in the Middle Ages.* John Watkins has recently called for renewed attention to premodern diplomacy, observing that "relationships *between* and *among* polities have remained under-investigated and under-theorized." Watkins, "Toward a New Diplomatic History," 1–14. On diplomacy specifically during the reign of Charles VI, see Le Bis, "Pratique de la diplomatie; and Autrand, "L'enfance de l'art diplomatique," 207–24.

48. Froissart, 5:215.

49. See Moranvillé, "Une lettre à Charles le Mauvais," 91–94.

50. Pintoin, 2:726.

51. Strohm, *England's Empty Throne,* 162.

52. Froissart, 15:69.

53. Froissart, 15:70.

54. Le Fèvre de Saint Rémy, *Choix de chroniques,* 306.

55. *Journal d'un bourgeois,* 338.

56. See Sommé, *Isabelle de Portugal,* 363.

57. Cited in Pélicier, *Essai sur le gouvernement,* 166.

58. Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory,* 204–5.

59. Hyams, *Rancor and Reconciliaton,* 201–2.

60. Offenstadt, "Les Femmes et la paix," 333. See also his "The Rituals of Peace," 88–100.

61. Turner, *The Ritual Process,* 95.

62. Ibid., 128–29.

63. See Fradenburg, "Introduction: Rethinking Queenship," 4–5.

64. Sommé, "Les Délégations de pouvoir," 289. See also her book *Isabelle de Portugal,* 385–87.

65. Dickinson, *The Congress of Arras,* 66n4: "The part played by the duchess Isabella at the Congress appears to have been that of a spectator, in contrast with her role as mediator in 1439, at which time her husband was not acceptable to the English as negotiator."

66. Offenstadt, "Les Femmes et la paix," 332.

67. Cited in Contamine, "Le Royaume de France," 79n30.

68. Coville, *Les Cabochiens,* 23.

69. Carroll, "The Peace in the Feud," 7.

70. Halsall, "Violence and Society," 21.

71. Ibid., 20.

72. Kaminsky, "The Noble Feud," 56.

73. Ibid., 58. See also Carroll, *Blood and Violence;* Smail, *The Consumption of Justice;* Bartlett, *Mortal Enmities;* Halsall, ed., *Violence and Society;* Caron, *La Noblesse dans le duché de Bourgogne;* and White, "Feuding and Peace-making."

74. Kaminsky, "The Noble Feud," 80.

75. Ibid., 58.

76. Vale, "Seigneurial Fortifications," 141.

77. Pollack-Lagushenko, "The Armagnac Faction," 238. See also Vale, "Seigneurial Fortifications," 133–48.

78. White, "Feuding and Peace-making," 263.

79. See Little, *The Parlement of Poitiers.*

80. See Pollack-Lagushenko, "The Armagnac Faction," 471–72.

81. Ibid., 236.

82. Ibid., 237.

83. See Emily J. Hutchison's study of the increasing impossibility of remaining above the fray as of 1410-11. "The symbols used, the violence faced and the implications of being called an 'Armagnac' or a 'Burgundian' forced ordinary people of the realm to join one faction or the other. Both the Armagnacs and the Burgundians continued to foster hatred for the 'other,' irrevocably altering the course of the private dispute." "Partisan Identity in the French Civil War," 274.

84. *Trois vertus,* 35.

85. For example, on fixing the age of majority, set by Philip III at 14 and reiterated by Charles V in 1374. On regency in France, see Olivier-Martin, *Les Régences et la majorité.* On use of the term *régent,* see Berger, "Le Titre de régent."

86. On regency, see *Ordonnances* 6:45–48; on *tutelle,* see 6:49–53.

87. *Ordonnances,* 6:26–30.

88. See Henneman, *Olivier de Clisson,* 103–113; *Charles VI,* 19–21; *Jean de France,* 2:11–17.

89. *Jean de France,* 2:292–93. With Charles's first episode of insanity, the royal uncles returned, routing the marmousets, the king's counselors, and reestablishing themselves in the government.

90. The ordinance is printed *Ordonnances,* 7:530–35.

91. See ibid., 535–38.

92. The ordinance specifies that Louis "ait le gouvernement, Garde & défense de nostre Royaume, jusques à ce que nostredit ainsné Filz soit entré oudit quatorzième

an de son aage," *Ordonnances,* 7:535. On Louis's use of it to defend his claim to power when Charles was indisposed, see, *Rivalité,* 71. See also Louis's own evaluation of his role in the government. Monstrelet reports that during the kidnapping crisis, Louis reminds delegates from the University of Paris that he is son and brother of a king, who has also been given control (*baillé*) of the realm when the king is unable to function, because of the youth of the dauphin. While this is not strictly true according to the ordinances, it seems to have been true in practice. *Monstrelet,* 1:122. Surprisingly little has been written on the career of Louis of Orleans; see *Louis d'Orléans* and the sections devoted to Louis in *Jean sans Peur.* Although dedicated to the entourage of all the dukes of Orleans, Gonzalez's *Un Prince en son hôtel* offers insight into Louis's career.

93. See Henneman, *Olivier de Clisson,* 158–59.

94. Heckmann, *Stellvertreter,* 1:324. As Heckmann explains, a regent ruling in the name of the king is a bit of a fiction, but it is a useful one, less likely to result in usurpation than a regent ruling in his own name.

95. These accusations are clearly present in the series of public letters exchanged between Louis of Orleans and Jean sans Peur in 1405, printed in Mirot, "L'Enlèvement du dauphin." On Louis's plan for disseminating his influence throughout the realm, see Demurger, *Temps de crises,* 86–90, and also the dissertation of Shultz, "The Artistic and Literary Patronage of Louis of Orléans."

96. These are printed in *Choix de pièces inédites,* 1:227–39 and 1:240–43.

97. See *Ordonnances,* 7:530.

98. Pintoin, 3:12.

99. See, for example, Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue,* 27. The ordinance of 1402 "increased her authority. From now on Isabeau was empowered in the king's absence to deal with governmental business of any type with the aid of the dukes and whichever councillors she wished."

100. Douët-d'Arcq, *Choix de pièces inédites,* 1:241.

101. "Sed dum jurgiis sepius terunt tempus quam consiliis, regina, ducibus Biturie et Borbonii mediantibus, ambo regiis uti cessaverunt, donec rex incolumitatem recepisset" (But as long as they spent the time more often in quarrelling than in advising, the queen and Dukes of Berry and Bourbon arbitrated that both cease to come to the Royal Council until the king had recovered his health). Pintoin, 3:36.

102. *Ordonnances* 7:535–38.

103. *Ordonnances,* 12:45–46. Compare also the specific powers delegated to Isabelle of Portugal by Philip the Good of Burgundy as described by Sommé, *Isabelle de Portugal,* 378–85.

104. See Lot and Fawtier, *Histoire des institutions françaises,* 75–84.

105. Pintoin, 3:36.

106. Cousinot, 108.

107. "Et specialiter ducem Aurelianis, tunc regni rectorem precipuum" (And es-

pecially the Duke of Orleans, then the foremost regent of the realm). Pintoin, 3:188. Besides registering Louis's perceived power, the passage also demonstrates his unpopularity, among some Parisians, at least. Nicolas Baye, *greffier* for the Parlement of Paris, notes that on July 27, 1404, a royal decree was delivered to the court by a provost regarding some defamatory *cédules* targeting the Duke of Orleans placed by persons of bad will on the walls of Notre-Dame and other churches. The decree threatened that anyone daring to repeat the act would be made an example of for others. *Journal de Nicolas de Baye,* 1:94–95. The list of events at the end of Baye's journal specifies that the *cédules* in question targeted the Duke of Orleans. See 2:288.

108. The classic study on the loyalties of the different members of Charles VI's Royal Council is that of Valois, *Le Conseil du roi.* Both Nordberg and Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue,* dispute the attachments of some of the individuals considered by Valois, but all agree that Louis possessed the greater influence over the Council. On the loyalties of the *sénéchau*x and *baillis,* see Demurger "Guerre civile."

109. *Ordonnances,* 8:577. Famiglietti sees the 1403 ordinance as reining in Isabeau's power. See *Royal Intrigue,* 28. Gibbons disagrees. Rather,

> the ordinance of 26 April 1403 should not be viewed in isolation, but recognised as the final stage in a developing process that began in March 1402 with the king's confirmation of Isabeau's authority as his replacement as an arbiter between the royal dukes. This power was greatly enhanced in July 1402 when her remit was extended to encompass all government business that needed to be dealt with during the emergency situations of Charles' debilitating relapses. Then, in April 1403, the queen's position was not so much the subject of a 'very significant restraint' as provided with a legislative context and the security of being underpinned by an inclusive Council. ("Active Queenship," 110)

110. *Ordonnances,* 8:587.

111. Ibid, 8:581.

112. Ibid., 8:582.

113. Guenée, *La Folie de Charles VI,* 295.

114. See Isambert, *Recueil général,* 7:59, for the letter patent.

115. Ibid., 8:578.

116. Cosandey, *La Reine de France,* 37.

117. Heckmann, *Stellvertreter,* 2:735–36; *Ordonnances,* 11:323. On Blanche's coregency, see *Stellvertreter,* 1:65–84. Miriam Shadis also argues for regarding Blanche's reign as a type of corule in "Blanche of Castile."

118. *Ordonnances,* 12:227–29.

119. *Ordonnances,* 9:488–89.

120. Monstrelet prints the letter Isabeau sent out to the cities of the realm, 3:230–36. See also Isabeau's ordinances establishing her regency: *Ordonnances* 10:429–34, 10:436–43, and 10:449–53.

121. Monstrelet, 3:233.

122. Pintoin, 1:687.

123. Ibid., 3:4–8.

124. Bozzolo and Loyau, *Cour amoureuse,* 1:36. The charter is printed in Bozzolo and Loyau, *Cour amoureuse,* 1:35–45.

125. "Le Livre de la trahison envers la maison de Bourgogne," 67.

126. Ibid., 67.

127. Ibid., 69.

128. Ibid., 70.

129. Pintoin, 4:358.

130. Monstrelet, 2:92.

131. See Offenstadt, "La Paix proclamée," 201–24.

132. Pintoin, 4:724.

133. Juvénal des Ursins, 465.

134. Ibid.

135. Pintoin, 4:93.

136. Kipling, *Enter the King,* 47.

137. Cosandey, *La Reine de France,* 137–38.

138. Ibid., 138.

139. Pintoin, 1:610

140. Cosandey, *La Reine de France,* 165.

141. Ibid., 129–30.

142. See Bryant, *The King and the City,* 81.

143. Ribémont, "L'Entrée d'Isabeau," 515–25.

144. Kipling, *Enter the King,* 294. See also 78–85 for a detailed description of other pageants relating Isabeau to the Virgin Mary and stressing her status as mediator.

145. Kipling, *Enter the King,* 294.

146. Froissart, 14:9–10.

147. Ibid., 14:13.

148. On this point, see Kahsnitz, "Kleinod und Andachtsbild, 70–71.

149. Marina Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex,* 114.

150. The scene is depicted as well on the Coronation Portal, located on the front of the cathedral. On the iconography of the *Porte Rouge,* see Gaposchkin, "The King of France."

151. Froissart, 14:13.

152. See in particular McCartney, "Ceremonies and Privileges of Office."

153. See Kahsnitz, "Kleinod und Andachtsbild," 58.

154. See Willibald Sauerländer, "Kinder als Nothelfer," 90–101.

155. On the date of the manuscript, see Laidlaw, "The Date of the Queen's MS."

156. *Le Débat sur le "Roman de la Rose,"* 5.

Chapter Four: Isabeau's Contemporary Reputation

Epigraphs. Viennot, *La France, les femmes et le pouvoir,* 361. Coville, *Les Cabochiens,* 88.

1. See Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue,* 42–43; Gibbons, "Isabeau of Bavaria," 62–63; and Straub, "Isabeau de Bavière," 134.

2. "Le Songe véritable."

3. Autrand, *Charles VI,* 485–86.

4. On the development of the king's nickname, see Guenée, *La Folie de Charles VI,* 263–71.

5. The document is edited by Moranvillé, "Remonstrances de l'Université."

6. See Coville's edition of *L'Ordonnance cabochienne.*

7. Marchello-Nizia, "Entre l'histoire et la poétique," 53.

8. Grandeau, "Isabeau de Bavière ou l'amour conjugale," 142.

9. William Chester Jordan, "Anti-corruption Campaigns," 208–9.

10. Krynen, *L'Empire du roi,* 419.

11. Ibid.

12. "La fin du XIVe et le début du XVe représentent au contraire un épilogue où l'exigence des réformes sert surtout de prétexte à l'assouvissement des rancunes des partis" (The end of the fourteenth and beginning of the fifteenth [centuries] represent in contrast an epilogue when demands for reform served as pretexts to satisfy rancor among factions). Cazelles, "Une Exigence de l'opinion depuis saint Louis," 95.

13. Fletcher, "Crisis and *Luxuria,*" 30.

14. Wolfe, "French Views," 467.

15. Ibid.

16. Fletcher, "Crisis and *Luxuria,*" 30-31.

17. See, for example, Miskimin, "The Last Act of Charles V"; and Elizabeth A. R. Brown, "Taxation and Morality."

18. Radding, "Royal Tax Revenues," 366 and 368.

19. Ibid., 366.

20. Cohn, *Popular Protest,* 261–337.

21. Krynen, *L'Empire du roi,* 417.

22. Contamine, "Le Vocabulaire politique," 155. See also Cazelles, *Société politique et la crise de la royauté,* 428; and Cazelles, *Société politique, noblesse et couronne,* 28– 31.

23. Gauvard, "Le Roi de France et l'opinion publique," 365.

24. Autrand, "Offices et officiers," 333.

25. Ibid., 332–33. See also Contamine, "Le Vocabulaire politique," 150.

26. Autrand, "Offices et officiers," 333–38.

27. Paravicini, "Administrateurs professionnels," 177.

28. Ibid.

29. *Le Songe du vergier,* 2:123.

30. Of course, as Marcel Mauss has argued, the gift is a form of self-deception: in gift societies, the domination created through gift-giving is mostly disguised. Mauss, "Gift, Gift," 28–32.

31. Weiner, *Inalienable Possessions,* 6.

32. Buettner, "Past Presents," 598.

33. Hirschbiegel, *Etrennes.*

34. Gauvard, "Le Roi de France et l'opinion publique," 355.

35. Krynen, *L'Empire du roi,* 432.

36. Ibid., 434.

37. Ibid., 435.

38. Gauvard, "Les Officiers royaux et l'opinion publique," 590.

39. Fletcher, "Crisis and *Luxuria,*" 36.

40. Radding, "Royal Tax Revenues," 366.

41. "In ambos procul dubio plebs maledictiones jaculare publice non verebatur." (Without a doubt, the people did not fear casting aspersions on them in public), Pintoin, 3:266; Juvénal des Ursins: "Et assez hautement par les ruës on les maudissoit . . . (And [the public] cast aspersions on them quite clearly in the streets), 434.

42. See Lewis, ed., *Écrits politiques,* 1:88, and René Planchenault, "La 'Chronique de la Pucelle,'" 95.

43. On Monstrelet, see Boucquey, "Enguerran de Monstrelet."

44. Le Fèvre de Saint-Rémy, *Chronique de Jean le Fèvre; Chronique des Cordeliers,* vol. 6; Cochon.

45. Nordberg demonstrates that a principal source for Pintoin's information on Louis of Orleans was Jean Petit's defense of Jean sans Peur's assassination of Louis. Nordberg, "Les Sources bourguignonnes."

46. Cousinot, 109.

47. On Pintoin, see Bernard Guenée's introduction to the reprint of Bellaguet's edition of the *Chronique du Religieux de Saint-Denis.* On the identity of the monk, see Grévy-Pons and Ornato, "Qui est l'auteur."

48. Guenée, *L'Opinion publique,* 12.

49. The subject of the circulation of rumor in the public space and whether or not this constitutes a form of public opinion has attracted substantial interest in recent decades. See Beaune, "La Rumeur," 191–203; Gauvard, "Rumeur et stéréotypes" and "Le Roi de France et l'opinion publique," 353–66; Contamine, "Aperçus sur la propagande," 5–27; Guenée, "Les Campagnes de lettres"; Danbury, "English and French Artistic Propaganda"; Lewis, "War Propaganda"; Hale, "War and Public Opinion"; Pons, "Informations et rumeurs."

50. Guenée, *L'Opinion publique,* 30–31 and 60.

51. Stahuljak, "Neutrality Affects," 137–56.

52. Pintoin, 1:54.

53. Valois, "Jacques de Nouvion," 238.

54. Guenée, *L'Opinion publique,* 178.

55. Guenée, "Fiction et réalité."

56. Gonzalez, *Un Prince en son hôtel,* 13.

57. Ibid., 14.

58. Ibid., 13.

59. Ibid., 14.

60. Pintoin, 3:55.

61. Pintoin, 3:36.

62. *Ordonnances,* 8:494.

63. Douët-d'Arcq, *Choix de pièces inédites,* 1:241.

64. Nordberg, "Les Sources bourguignonnes," 97; see also Delaborde, "La Vraie chronique."

65. Nordberg, "Les Sources bourguignonnes," 86–87.

66. Guenée, *L'Opinion publique,* 61.

67. It should be noted that Nordberg makes a typographical error, attributing the passage to Monstrelet, although in his text he attributes it correctly to Cochon. The passage can be found in Cochon, 387.

68. Pintoin, 3:284.

69. Nordberg, "Les Sources bourguignonnes," 92–93.

70. See *Louis d'Orléans,* 308, and Nordberg, "Les Sources bourguignonnes," 93. Louis makes reference to the position in a letter printed in *Choix des pièces inédites,* 281. His job was to see that the borders were guarded against the English.

71. Pintoin, 3:330.

72. Nordberg, "Les Sources bourguignonnes," 91.

73. Rey, *Le Domaine du roi,* 338–39.

74. Ibid., 339.

75. Pintoin, 1:687.

76. See the ordinances of Charles V and VI, awarding Philip a central role in the guardianship of the dauphin and administration of the realm when the king was indisposed.

77. See Nordberg, "Les Sources bourguignonnes," 187–88. Nordberg compares Jean's justificatory letter of September 8 with the account of Pintoin. As for the position of Monstrelet, Nordberg demonstrates that he mirrors Pintoin to a large extent but adds details not found in Pintoin.

78. See Pintoin, 5:18. "Inde procul dubio tristantur cum venerabili regina matre vestra omnes lilia deferentes de regio sanguine procreati, verentes ne, dum ad virilem perveneritis etatem, indignum vos faciant auctoritate sceptrigera" (For that reason, without doubt, all the princes of the blood along with the venerable queen, your mother, fear that when you have reached the age of manhood, they [evil counselors] will have caused you to be unworthy of reigning).

79. Coville, *Les Cabochiens,* 2.
80. Pintoin, 3:228.
81. See Vaughan, *Philip the Bold,* 226–36, and *John the Fearless,* 103–52.
82. Pintoin, 3:230.
83. Rey, *Les Finances royales,* 39–40.
84. Pintoin, 3:266.
85. See Beltran, "Un Sermon français."
86. Pepin, *Literature of Satire.*
87. See the introduction to Jacques Legrand, *Archiloge sophie.*
88. See Phillpotts, "The Fate of the Truce of Paris."
89. Walsingham, *Chronica maiora,* 248.
90. Chartier, *Le Quadrilogue invectif,* 17–21.
91. Pintoin, 3:266.
92. Vale, *The Princely Court,* 22.
93. Pintoin, 3:288–90.
94. Ibid., 3:330-31.
95. See Grandeau, "Les Dames," 206–7.
96. Ibid., 227.
97. On the skill of Jean of Burgundy as propagandist, see Willard, "The Manuscripts of Jean Petit's Justification."
98. Guenée, *L'Opinion publique,* 12.
99. Ibid., 63, 65, 90.
100. Guenée, "Fiction et réalité," 11.
101. Guenée, "Michel Pintoin," 51.
102. Daly, "Private Vice, Public Service?" 99–118.
103. Fenster and Smail, *Fama,* 3.
104. Ibid., 7–8.
105. See Habermas, *Structural Transformation.* Although Habermas's description of the evolution of the modern public sphere is controversial—see Sizer's critique, "Making Revolution Medieval," 231–43—his notion that during the Middle Ages no public existed, but only public display, so to speak, is popular.
106. Habermas, Lennox, and Lennox, "The Public Sphere," 51.
107. Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture,* 50.
108. Guenée, *L'Opinion publique,* 32.
109. Arnade, *Realms of Ritual,* 129.
110. Symes, *A Common Stage,* 130.
111. Oliver, "A Political Pamphleteer."
112. Coville, *Les Cabochiens,* 93.

Chapter Five: Isabeau of Bavaria and the Cour amoureuse

Epigraph. Boulton, *The Knights of the Crown,* 26.

1. Quoted in Piaget, "Un manuscrit de la *Cour amoureuse,*" 418. Moreau de Mautour discovered in the manuscript now known as 10469 of the *fonds français* of the *Bibliothèque Nationale Française,* collated along with a "traité du blazon, l'armorial des chevaliers et rois de l'Espinette, une ordonnance de Philippe, duc de Bourgogne" and the names and arms of the members of the Cour amoureuse.

2. Scholarship on the increasingly negative attitudes toward the royalty during the eighteenth century is vast; for a recent perspective, see Schaich, *Monarchy and Religion.*

3. Piaget, "Un manuscrit de la *Cour amoureuse,*" 418. More generally on anti-Paméla writings, see Hartmann, "La Réception de *Paméla* en France," 47.

4. Piaget, "Un manuscrit de la *Cour amoureuse,*" 419.

5. De Keralio, *Les Crimes des Reines de France,* 143.

6. Straub, "Die Grundung."

7. See Bozzolo and Ornato, "Princes, prélats, barons et autres gens," 162.

8. Bozzolo and Loyau, *La Cour amoureuse, dite de Charles VI,* 1:35–45. A number of purposes have been suggested for the Cour amoureuse by scholars who believe the institution to have existed in fact. Recently, Jane H. M. Taylor has observed: "Human beings in general, and poets in particular, are necessarily participants within a field, a structured site of essentially competitive relations which offers a range of social, intellectual, or aesthetic positions, structures of possibility which can be deployed strategically, competitively, for individual advantage." *The Making of Poetry,* 13–18, 34. Jacqueline Cerquiglini writes that the institution was conceived of "as a therapy that would permit an entire society in crisis to escape a sentiment—melancholy—that was becoming predominant in both life and aesthetics." *The Color of Melancholy,* 47. See also her entry on St. Valentine's Day 1401 in *A New History of French Literature,* 114–18. Bernard Guenée, too, emphasizes the seriousness of purpose of the institution, writing:

> Ces laïcs qui cultivaient la joie, l'amour et la poésie étaient pourtant moins frivoles qu'il n'y paraît d'abord. Ils n'étaient pas si loin des clercs. Ils avaient de la religion. . . . Les membres de la *cour d'Amour* entendaient aussi honorer Dieu et ses saints, et d'ailleurs plusieurs prelates de grandes familles en faisaient partie. Comme les clercs, les laïcs estimaient l'éloquence, et ils aimaient les livres.
>
> [These lay people who cultivated joy, love and poetry, were nonetheless less frivolous than it might appear at first sight. They were not so far from clerics. They had religion. . . . The members of the Cour amoureuse intended to honor God and the saints, especially the many prelates of important families

who took part. Like clerics, these lay people held eloquence in esteem, and they loved books.] (Guenée, *Un meurtre, une société,* 149)

9. See, for example, Scott and Sturm-Maddox, *Performance, Poetry and Politics;* Crawford, *Perilous Performances.* See also ffolliott's work on Catherine de Médicis, including "Women in the Garden of Allegory, 207–24; "Make Love Not War," 213–32; "Catherine de' Medici as Artemisia," 227–41.

10. See Bozzolo and Loyau, *Cour amoureuse,* 1:7–34, for a description of the manuscripts.

11. Ibid., 1:18.

12. The charter is printed in Bozzolo and Loyau, *Cour amoureuse,* 1:35–45.

13. A number of references within the charter specify that the date in question is February 14. This date correlates with what Henry Ansgar Kelly has shown, that although earlier celebrated on May 3, Valentine's Day came to be celebrated on February 14 in the late fourteenth century. See his *Chaucer and the Cult of Saint Valentine.*

14. Bozzolo and Loyau, *Cour amoureuse,* 1:45.

15. Ibid., 1:36.

16. Straub, "Die Grundung des Pariser Minnehofs," 7–8.

17. See Straub, "Die Grundung des Pariser Minnehofs," 8–11. Based on the itineraries of Charles VI, Louis of Orleans, Philip of Burgundy, and Isabeau of Bavaria, he concludes that only Isabeau was present at the court during the composition of the charter of the Cour amoureuse.

18. Grandeau, "L'Intinéraire," 582.

19. Bozzolo and Loyau, *Cour amoureuse,* 1:36, lines 21–23.

20. Straub, "Die Grundung des Pariser Minnehofs," 8.

21. Petit, *Itinéraires de Philippe le Hardi,* 293–95.

22. See Grandeau, "L'Itinéraire," 599n3.

23. Petit, *Itinéraires de Philippe le Hardi,* 293.

24. Bozzolo and Loyau, *Cour amoureuse,* 1:35. On Pierre de Hauteville, see 1:59.

25. Bozzolo and Loyau, *Cour amoureuse,* 1:37. Louis II of Bourbon is described by Autrand, *Charles VI,* as an ideal prince, loyal throughout his life to the crown (194–98). Louis later took sides with the Orleanists against Jean sans Peur.

26. Bozzolo and Loyau, *Cour amoureuse,* 1:37. The dates given in the charter are a bit confusing. Later, it is announced that on Valentine's Day ("au jour de monseigneur saint Valentin, .XIIIIe. de fevrier prochain venant") a mass will be sung at the church of St. Catherine du Val des Ecoliers (near the royal residence of the Hôtel St. Pol). The twenty-four ministers will be required to attend along with all those who will present their poetry that day. 1:39.

27. See Boulton, *The Knights of the Crown,* 1–26.

28. Bozzolo and Loyau, *Cour amoureuse,* 1:36.

29. Ibid., 1:162.

30. Ibid., 1:40.

31. Ibid., 1:39.

32. Ibid., 1:38.

33. On Louis as a patron of Humanists, see Schultz, "The Artistic and Literary Patronage," 368–94; and Ouy, "Paris."

34. See Small, "The Centre," 145–74. See also Bozzolo and Ornato, "Princes, prélats, barons et autres gens," 167–68.

35. See *Poems of Cupid.*

36. Piaget, "Un manuscrit de la *Cour amoureuse.*" The fact that the Treaty of Gien was signed and sealed by the Armagnac faction, united to avenge the assassination of Louis of Orleans and chase Jean sans Peur from power, on April 15, 1410, may be a further indication that the purpose of the Burgundian Cours amoureuse was not merely literary, but that it also served to represent Burgundian power.

37. In *Le Paris de Charles V,* 82–166.

38. See Piaget, "Un manuscrit de la *Cour amoureuse,*" 450–54.

39. Cayley, *Debate and Dialogue,* 13.

40. Taylor, "The Making of Poetry," 34.

41. *Le Débat sur le "Roman de la Rose,"* 5.

42. Quotations and translations from Christine de Pizan, "The Epistle of the Prison of Human Life," 70–73.

43. Christine de Pizan, *Cité des dames,* 422.

44. Marchello-Nizia, "Amour courtois," 969–82.

45. See Douët-d'Arcq, *Choix de pièces inédites,* 1:220–26, esp. 225.

46. See Chattaway, *The Order of the Golden Tree,* 21.

47. Ibid., 113.

48. Ibid., 85.

49. Scott and Sturm-Maddox, *Performance, Poetry and Politics,* 211. Also on Catherine's use of rhetoric in mediation, see Crouzet, " 'A Strong Desire,'" 103–18.

Chapter Six: Reinterpreting the Enlèvement du dauphin

Epigraph. Heng, "Feminine Knots," 501.

1. Stafford, "Emma," 10.

2. Ibid., 10–11.

3. See *Rivalité,* 187–88.

4. On Jean's titles, see Vaughan, *John the Fearless,* 6–8.

5. See Jean's justificatory letter published in Mirot, "L'Enlèvement du dauphin," 396.

6. As for the Duke of Burgundy's reason for going to Paris, see Monstrelet, 1:108. "Mais aux ambaxadeurs dessusdiz fut par le duc d'Orleans et autres du conseil baillé response négative. Et pour tant, ledit duc de Bourgogne, oye la response devant dicte

par sesdiz ambaxadeurs, se disposa d'aler à Paris devers le Roy pour mieulx expédier et conduire ses besognges" (But the Duke of Orleans and others of the Council gave a negative response to the ambassadors. Hearing the said response from his ambassadors, the Duke of Burgundy decided to go to Paris to the king to better take care of and conduct his business). Monstrelet continues on the same page: "En après, quant ledit Duc de Bourgogne eut conclud dedens Arras sur ces afaires, il se parti, à tout plusieurs hommes d'armes, jusques à huit cens combatans, couvertement armez, la vigile de l'Asumpcion Nostre-Dame, pour aler à Paris" (Afterward, when the Duke of Burgundy had concluded his affairs in Arras, he left, with many men at arms, as many as eight hundred soldiers, covertly armed, the evening before the Assumption of Our Virgin, to go to Paris).

7. Pintoin, 3:230.

8. See Vaughan, *John the Fearless,* 41, and Schnerb, *Jean sans Peur,* 156–58.

9. Vaughan reports that Philip received 188,600 francs in gifts and pensions from the royal treasury, compared with the 37,000 francs that Jean was assigned (although not paid in full) during the first year of his reign and the 2,000 francs he received in the second year. *John the Fearless,* 42.

10. See Chousat's letter describing the affair, in Mirot, "L'Enlèvement du dauphin," 395–96.

11. Schnerb, *Jean sans Peur,* 157, on Jean's nonpayment; on Louis's annual income from the treasury, see Vaughan, *John the Fearless,* 42–43.

12. Monstrelet, 1:98.

13. See chapter 3, note 91, above.

14. See Isambert, *Recueil général,* 7:59, for the letter patent. If the king had created

> par le conseil de ceux qui lors estoient entour nous certains testamentz, codicilles et autres ordennances entre vifs, lesquels aucuns pourroient presumer estre derogés aux droits, prerogatives et honneurs qui y appartiennent et ou tems avenir pourroient et devroient appartenir de droit et raison commune, coustume et usage de nostre royaume ou autrement à nostre frere dessusdit [according to the advice of those close to us, testaments, codicils, and other ordinances among which some might be understood to have damaged the rights, prerogatives, and honors now belonging or that will belong by law and common reason, custom and usage, to our kingdom or to our brother]

they were to be considered invalid. As for the ordinance of April 26, 1403, see *Ordonnances,* 8:582.

15. See *Rivalité,* 193. Nordberg notes that John's written request for reforms that was presented at the Louvre by Jean Nielles makes no mention of the dauphin who in fact presided over the presentation of the request, but refers instead to Charles VI, who was indisposed at the time. The presentation took place on August 21, well after

the king's latest lapse, which had taken place on August 16 or 17. This strongly suggests that the request was written ahead of time, before Jean's arrival in Paris. Also, the dramatic events surrounding the abduction of the dauphin are not mentioned, once again suggesting that the request was written before these events occurred. Finally, Jean himself admits that he came to Paris with the intention of promoting reforms in his first public letter justifying the kidnapping. He writes that he made the trip "pour le [roi] visiter et aviser, comme l'en disoit, du petit gouvernement de ce royaume." De Baye, *Journal,* 1:137.

16. The Burgundian affectation of reformer and the bad faith with which it was affected has been acknowledged by modern historians, who recognize that the medieval route to power—the amassing of territory and influence—was inherently rapacious, expansionist, and self-interested, and that Philip and Jean were as active in the game as Louis, the object of their reformist propaganda. When it suited him, Jean supported the war against the English, a primary reason for the disaster of France's finances. Furthermore, the moment Jean gained power he installed his own cronies in important positions, despite his criticisms of Louis for doing just that. See Schnerb, *Jean sans Peur,* 169, where the motivation behind the Burgundian tendency to fashion themselves as men of the people is described. Earlier historians were more willing to accept the Burgundian self-representation at face value.

17. Guenée, *La Folie de Charles VI* , 295. Guenée writes that Pintoin, Nicolas Baye, Juvénal des Ursins, and Monstrelet all mention this episode of mental illness. Unlike Monstrelet and Juvénal des Ursins, however, Guenée continues, Pintoin mistakenly believes that the king remains in a state of mental incapacity throughout the entire crisis of the "enlèvement du dauphin." Monstrelet reports that Charles enjoyed a brief recovery beginning August 25, when he received hommage from the Duke of Burgundy and his brothers and presided over some sessions of the royal council. See also Juvénal des Urins, 432. Guenée notes that the recovery lasted until September 23.

18. Printed by Mirot, "L'Enlèvement du dauphin," 396–97.

19. Ibid., 396.

20. De Baye, *Journal,* 1:139.

21. Mirot, "L'Enlèvement du dauphin," 403.

22. The discourse is printed in Mirot, "L'Enlèvement du dauphin," 399–403.

23. Rey, *Le Domaine du roi,* 338–39.

24. See Gross, "The Political Influence of the University of Paris," 440–45.

25. On the Duke of Burgundy's relationship with the University of Paris, see, in addition to Gross, "The Political Influence of the University of Paris," Tournier, "Jean sans Peur et l'Université de Paris," 30–31, on privileges; Tuilier, *Histoire de l'Université de Paris.* For more on Jean's popularity with the university, see Richard Vaughan, *John the Fearless,* 32, 43, and Schnerb, *Jean sans Peur,* 553. On the political influence of the University of Paris during the early fifteenth century, see Coville, *Les Cabochiens,* 114–35.

26. On the motivations behind support for different solutions to the Schism on the parts of the university and the princes of the blood, see Kaminsky, "The Politics of France's Subtraction of Obedience," 366–97.

27. See Douët-d'Arcq, *Choix des pièces inédites,* 1:270, for the letter of August 25 of Olivier de Mauni to the King of Castile:

> mais je cuide que le Roy et son conseil y remédieront, tèlement qu'ils demourront bons amis, de Dieu plaist. Et a len défendu à mondit seigneur de Bourgogne et crié partout Paris de par le Roye, qu'il n'assemble ne tiengne nulles gens d'armes pour ceste cause. Et aussi mon très redoubté seigneur vous plaise sçavoir que monseigneur de Bourbon et autres du conseil du Roy sont alez à Meleun pardevers mondit seigneur d'Orliens pour lui faire semblable deffense que l'on a fait à mondit seigneur de Bougogne.
> [but I believe that the king and his Council will take care of it, so that they will remain friends, God willing. And it was forbidden Monsieur of Burgundy, and cried everywhere in Paris on behalf of the king, that he not assemble or keep any soldiers for any reason. And also, my mighty Lord, I would like you to know that Monsieur of Boubon and the others of the Royal Council went to Melun to Monsieur of Orleans to forbid him to do the same to Monsieur of Burgundy.]

28. See *Rivalité,* 201. The *Chambre des comptes* document is preserved in BN fonds français 10237 ff. 53 and 53v.

29. See *Rivalité,* 195.

30. Douët-d'Arcq, *Choix des pièces inédites,* 1:273–83.

31. Ibid., 1:274 and 276.

32. Ibid., 1:275.

33. Ibid., 1:282.

34. Printed in Mirot, "L'Enlèvement du dauphin," 405–13.

35. Letter printed in Mirot, "L'Enlèvement du dauphin," 397–99, here 398.

36. See Valois, *Le Conseil du roi.*

37. See Pintoin, 3:309. See also Lehoux, *Jean de France,* 3:51, esp. n5: the king's treasurer, Hemon Raguier, writes Lehoux, records expenses for an "armée faite à Paris pour la garde et deffence de ladite ville, sous le gouvernement de Monseigneur le duc de Berry, garde et gouverneur de la ditte ville, pour raison du debat et descort entre Monseigneur le duc d'Orleans, d'une part, et Monseigneur le duc de Bourgogne." (army assembled in Paris for the guard and defense of the said city, under the government of Monsieur the Duke of Berry, guardian and governor of the said city, because of the debate and discord between Monsieur the Duke of Orleans, on the one hand, and Monsieur the Duke of Burgundy, on the other.)

38. Pintoin, 3:340.

39. Juvénal des Ursins, 437.

40. Cochon, 373.
41. See *Rivalité,* 201–2.
42. Ibid., 202.
43. Mirot, "L'Enlèvement du dauphin," 349.
44. Ibid., 336–37.
45. Schnerb, *Jean sans Peur,* 172–77.
46. Verdon, *Isabeau de Bavière,* 143. The recent assessment of the incident by Françoise Artrand casts no new light on it. Autrand, *Christine de Pizan,* 265–75.
47. Douët-d'Arcq, *Choix des pièces inédites,* 1:234.
48. Guenée, *La Folie de Charles VI,* 206–8.
49. Ibid.
50. Juvénal des Ursins, 432.
51. Ibid.
52. Pintoin, 3:312–14.
53. Ibid., 3:310-12.
54. Douët-d'Arcq, *Choix de pièces inédites,* 1:240.
55. Pintoin, 3:342.
56. Ibid., 3:342–44.
57. AN KK 46, f. 94.
58. Monstrelet, 1:124.
59. Juvénal des Ursins, 433.
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid.
62. *Ordannance,* 12:222
63. Ibid., 2:223.
64. Ibid.
65. Pintoin, 3:310–14.
66. See Rey, *Les Finance royales sous Charles VI,* 187–88, 228.
67. This impression is corrected by Christine's more recent biographer, Suzanne Roux in *Christine de Pizan: Femme de tête, dame de coeur.*
68. Quotations and translations from Christine de Pizan, *The Epistle of the Prison of Human Life,* 72–73.
69. Jarry, *Louis d'Orléans,* 331.
70. McLeod, *The Order of the Rose,* 117.
71. Rey, *Les Finance royales sous Charles VI,* 187.
72. On Christine's understanding of the role of female mediator in "An Epistle," see D'Arcens, "Petit estat vesval," 201–26.
73. Constable, *Letters and Letter-Collections,* fasc. 17, 11.
74. Ibid., 54.
75. Camargo, *Ars dictaminis, ars dictandi,* fasc. 60, 18.
76. See Willard, "An Autograph Manuscript of Christine de Pizan?"

77. Richards, "Seulette a part," 162.

78. See Rouse and Rouse, *Manuscripts and Their Makers* and Busby, *Codex and Context,* 2:714–36.

79. Little is known about the audiences for Christine's political writings, but given what Joyce Coleman has called the "aural" state of the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century courts, it seems unlikely that only the addressee of a given manuscript, be it the queen, the Duke of Berry, or Louis, would have read the works addressed to him or her. See Coleman's *Public Reading,* esp. 95–97. Further on the difficulty of ascertaining the audiences for Christine's political works, see Hicks, "The Political Significance of Christine de Pizan," 1–15.

80. Blanchard, "L'Entrée du poète," 44.

81. Scanlon, "The King's Two Voices," 217.

82. Staley, "Gower," 71.

83. Christine de Pizan, "An Epistle," 70-73.

84. On Christine's use of maternal imagery to describe Isabeau, see also Delogu, "Christine de Pizan's Elaboration of Female Authority," 57–67. Also on Isabeau as maternal figure in this poem, see Bozzolo, "Familles éclatées," 1:119–21; 1:123.

85. Christine de Pizan, "An Epistle," 72–73.

86. Ibid., 76.

87. Ibid.

88. Ibid., 78.

89. Christine de Pizan, *Cité des dames,* 430.

90. Christine de Pizan, "An Epistle," 72.

91. Ibid., 80.

92. Christine de Pizan, *Cité des dames,* 94.

93. As can be seen in the south portal of the west façade, the portal of the *Mère de Dieu,* of the Amiens Cathedral, where Solomon and the Queen of Sheba reflect Christ and Mary. Like the Virgin, the Queen of Sheba—often depicted with the Christ-figure Solomon, whose wisdom she tried to prove through riddles—was associated with Ecclesia and the Bride of Christ. See Rickard, "The Iconography of the Virgin Portal," 153; Ostoia, "Two Riddles," 78–79; and Watson, "The Queen of Sheba," 115–45.

94. Watson, "The Queen of Sheba,"117.

95. On this group of women as a sort of ideal Royal Council, see Richards, "Political Thought as Improvisation," 12–13. Christine Clark-Evans has written on Nicaula in the *Cité des dames* but does not mention Christian interpretations of the figure. "Nicaula of Egypt and Arabia," 1:287–300.

96. Christine de Pizan, *Cité des dames,* 104.

97. AN, KK 43, fol. 81v and 82v. I would like to thank James Laidlaw for first drawing my attention to these items in Isabeau's accounts and for generously lending me his personal notes of the accounts relevant to Christine de Pizan.

Chapter Seven: Revisiting the Treaty of Troyes

Epigraph. Barbey, *Lois fondamentales,* 7

1. Gordon, *Joan of Arc,* 33.
2. Ibid., 34–35.
3. Sullivan, *The Interrogation of Joan of Arc,* 67.
4. Allmand, *The Hundred Years War,* 29.
5. Fenin, "Mémoires de Pierre de Fenin," 5:385–86.
6. Pintoin, 6:586–88.
7. *Royal Intrigue,* 155.
8. Ibid.
9. Grandeau, "Le Dauphin Jean," 683.
10. Pintoin, 6:50.
11. Ibid., 6:52.
12. Ibid., 6:2–10.
13. See Pétigny, "Charte inédite."
14. Grandeau, "Le Dauphin Jean," 689.
15. Ibid., 689.
16. Monstrelet, 3:165–66.
17. Grandeau, "Le Dauphin Jean," 708.
18. Ibid., 711–12.
19. Ibid., 713.
20. Monstrelet, 3:168.
21. Fresne de Beaucourt, *Histoire de Charles VII,* 1:67.
22. Monstrelet, 3:176.
23. Fradenburg, "Introduction: Rethinking Queenship," 5.
24. *Ordonnances,* vol. 10:424–26.
25. Letter printed in Monstrelet, 3:230–35.
26. Monstrelet, 3:231.
27. *Ordonnances* 10:427–29.
28. Monstrelet, 3: 237–40.
29. Plancher, *Histoires* général, preuves, 3, no. 302.
30. Fresne de Beaucourt, *Histoire de Charles VII,* 76.
31. Ibid., 85.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid., 86.
34. Fauquembergue, *Journal,* 1:135.
35. Pintoin, 6:253.
36. See "Entrée de la Reine Isabeau," 105.
37. Bonenfant, *Du meurtre de Montereau,* 3.
38. Fresne de Beaucourt, *Histoire de Charles VII,* 1:120.

39. Fauquembergue, *Journal,* 1:225.

40. Bonenfant, *Du meurtre de Montereau,* 13.

41. See Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue,* 190.

42. Pintoin, 6:332.

43. Monstrelet prints the accord, 3:324–29.

44. Letter to Henry V by Isabeau, printed in Fresne de Beaucourt, *Histoire de Charles VII,* 1:187.

45. Fresne de Beaucourt, *Histoire de Charles VII,* 1:149.

46. Pintoin, 6:98.

47. Printed in Fresne de Beaucourt, *Histoire de Charles VII,* vol. 1. Isabeau refers to Charles's *voies obliques* (186).

48. Fauquembergue, *Journal,* 1:317.

49. Although Fresne de Beaucourt sees the hesitation as coming from the Duke of Burgundy. See 1:156–61.

50. Bonenfant, *Du meurtre de Montereau,* 15.

51. Ibid., 19.

52. Fauquembergue, *Journal,* 1:318.

53. Monstrelet, 3:356.

54. Fauquembergue, *Journal,* 1:318.

55. Letter printed in Fresne de Beaucourt, *Histoire de Charles VII,* 1:186–89.

56. Bonenfant, *Du meurtre de Montereau,* 32.

57. Report of the conversations held between the Count of St. Pol, the Royal Council, and the English embassy printed in Bonenfant, *Du meurtre de Montereau,* 193.

58. Printed in Bonenfant, *Du meurtre de Montereau,* 193.

59. Ibid., 78–81.

60. Ibid., 80.

61. Ibid., 24.

62. See Bonenfant, *Du meurtre de Montereau,* 85; the letter patent, printed in Rymer, *Foedera,* 9:820-21, clearly grants Philip only the power to negotiate truces, not the power to sign a final peace accord.

63. Bonenfant, *Du meurtre de Montereau,* 87.

64. Ibid., 88.

65. Document printed in Bonenfant, *Du meurtre de Montereau,* 232–33.

66. Ibid., 91.

67. Printed in Bonenfant, *Du meurtre de Montereau,* 237.

68. Calmette and Déprez. "Un Essai d'union nationale."

69. Bonenfant, *Du meurtre de Montereau,* 100–1.

70. Ibid., 101.

71. Ibid., 128.

72. In Pons, *L'Honneur de la couronne de France,* 124.

73. Pons, "Intellectual Patterns," 58.
74. Pons, *L'Honneur de la couronne de France,* 123.
75. Printed in Bonenfant, *Du meurtre de Montereau,* 232.
76. See the case made by Bonenfant, *Du meurtre de Montereau,* 98–100.
77. Ibid., 119.
78. Ibid., 126.
79. Ibid., 127.
80. Fauquembergue, *Journal,* 1:358.
81. Ibid., 1:360-61.
82. Ibid., 1:362.
83. Calmette and Déprez, "Un Essai d'union nationale," 345.
84. See Schnerb, *Jean sans Peur,* 642.
85. On the hatred between Louis II of Anjou and Jean of Burgundy, see Vaughan, *John the Fearless,* 194.
86. See Fresne de Beaucourt, *Histoire de Charles VII,* 60-61, and Vale, *Charles VII,* 24.
87. Vale, *Charles VII,* 24.
88. Ibid., 22.
89. Ibid., 24.
90. Bonenfant, *Du meurtre de Montereau,* 105–7.
91. Printed in Fresne de Beaucourt, 1:94. Armagnac, located in the foothills of the Pyrenees, possessed its own dialect.
92. Pollack-Lagushenko, "The Armagnac Faction," 228.
93. Juvénal des Ursins, 533.
94. See Schnerb, *Jean sans Peur,* 642.
95. Balibar, "The Nation Form," 88.
96. David Bell, *The Cult of the Nation in France,* esp. 59–62.
97. Giesey, "The Juristic Basis," 3.
98. Ibid., 12.
99. Heckmann, *Stellvertreter,* 1:306.
100. Mark Warner, "The Anglo-French Dual Monarchy," 104.
101. Pintoin, 6:480-82.
102. See Armstrong, "La Double Monarchie," 343–45.

Chapter Eight: Wife, Mother, Friend

Epigraph. Christine de Pizan, *Oeuvres poétiques,* 1:227–28.
1. Grandeau, "Isabeau de Bavière," 117–48, and Famiglietti, *Tales of the Marriage Bed,* 188–95.
2. See Vaughan, *John the Fearless,* 75–76, for a translation of part of the letter, which is printed in Calmette, "Contribution à l'histoire des relations."

3. Froissart, 10:350.

4. Ibid.

5. See Hindman, "The Iconography of Queen Isabeau de Baviere," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts,* 102–10.

6. *Le Pastoralet,* 43, line 151.

7. Brachet, *Pathologie mentale,* 44. Isabeau's accounts show the purchase of a wheelchair; this may also have contributed to the legend of her obesity. However, one might purchase a wheelchair for various maladies, not necessarily because one is too large to walk.

8. Pintoin, 4:285.

9. Pintoin, 1:356–58.

10. Grandeau, "L'Intinéraire."

11. Froissart, 10:349.

12. Autrand, "'Hôtel de seigneur,'" 51–61.

13. Grandeau remarks that the notables of Senlis gathered on July 23 to discuss a gift for the queen when she entered the city. Grandeau, "L'Intinéraire," 579.

14. Pintoin, 1:360, recounts that the king left his new bride in the *custodie* of the Duchess of Orleans and the Count of Eu, both of them mature ("ambo mature etatis errant").

15. Pintoin, 1:610.

16. See Grandeau, "Isabeau de Bavière ou l'amour conjugale," 120–21.

17. Grandeau, "L'Intinéraire," 579.

18. The Froissart story can be found in 14:80; the article verifying the essentials of the story is Moranvillé, "Une Course," 718–20.

19. See Grandeau, "Isabeau de Bavière ou l'amour conjugale," 139; Grandeau cites KK 41, f. 187.

20. Catherine, born October 27, 1401, would have been conceived in late January; the king suffered a crisis between January 19 and February 25; Charles, born February 22, 1403, would have been conceived in in late May 1402; Charles was insane from mid-May until early June. See Guenée, *La Folie de Charles VI,* 294–96, for the dates of the king's insanity.

21. Juvénal des Ursins, 445.

22. Pintoin, 1:566.

23. Ibid., 2:88.

24. Pintoin, 2:90-92.

25. Gibbons, "The Piety of Isabeau of Bavaria," 222; Gibbons cites AN JJ 161, f. 21.

26. Froissart, 15:431.

27. On the woman who has come to be known as "la petite reine," see Vallet de Viriville, "Odette ou Odinette," 171–81.

28. Pintoin, 6:486.

29. Grandeau, "L'Amour conjugale," 147n87.

30. See Gibbons, 223; she cites AN KK32, f. 24.

31. Thibault, 253–54.

32. AN KK 18, f. 42v. On Isabeau's library, see Vallet de Vivirille, "La Bibliothèque d'Isabeau de Bavière," 663–78.

33. Grandeau, "Les Dames qui ont servi la reine," 233.

34. Grandeau, "L'Exercice de la piété," 149–152. See also Gibbons, 222. For the *Passion Isabeau,* see DuBruck's edition of the work.

35. Grandeau, "L'Exercice de la piété," 150. See also Mooney, "Queenship in Fifteenth Century France," 369. Franciscan friar Michel le Doyen served as her confessor from 1398 to 1411; Guillaume de Boisratiers, archbishop of Bourges in 1413; Franciscan friar Guillaume de la Haye, from 1415 to 1417.

36. Grandeau, "L'Exercice de la piété," 150–52.

37. Gibbons, "The Piety of Isabeau of Bavaria," 218–19.

38. Hoüel, *Mémoires et recherches,* 25.

39. See Grandeau, "Les Enfants de Charles VI," 812.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid., 814.

42. Ibid., 824.

43. Ibid.

44. Thibault, 445–46; he cites AN K 180, f. 16.

45. Gibbons, "The Queen as 'Social Mannequin,'" 382–92.

46. For further information, see the collection of essays, Sheingorn and Ashley, *Interpreting Cultural Symbols.*

47. Gibbons, "The Queen as 'Social Mannequin,'" 389.

48. Mirot, "Isabelle de France," 5–6.

49. Ibid., 46.

50. Gibbons, "The Queen as 'Social Mannequin,'" 390. See also Grandeau, "Les Enfants de Charles VI," 826–30, for descriptions of the royal children's wardrobes.

51. Pintoin, 3:393–95.

52. Ibid., 3:739.

53. "Active Queenship," 58.

54. Thibault, 330-31.

55. Douët-d'Arcq, *Choix de pieces inédites,* 1:194.

56. Pintoin, 4:6.

57. Juvénal des Ursins records Isabelle's tears throughout the wedding, 438.

58. See Thibault, 33, and Lehoux, *Jean de France,* 3:153.

59. "Active Queenship," 58.

60. Monstrelet, 3:320.

61. Grandeau, "Les Dernières Années," 419–20; the will, cited by Grandeau, is in AN K 63, ff. 16 and 16 verso.

62. Thibault, 207.

63. Pintoin, 1:598.

64. Ibid., 1:586.

65. Ibid., 2:64.

66. Ibid., 2: 66–68. The story is recounted in Pintoin, 2:64–70, and Froissart, 15:84–92.

67. Grandeau, "Les Dames," 130.

68. Paravicini, *Invitations au mariage,* 36.

69. Froissart, 15:83.

70. The illumination can be viewed on a Web site devoted to the Harley 4431 at www.pizan.lib.ed.ac.uk/context.html.

71. Autrand, "'Hôtel de seigneur ne vaut rien sans dame,'" 51.

72. Ibid.

73. Grandeau, "L'Intinéraire d'Isabeau de Bavière," 572.

74. In particular, see Mooney, "Queenship in Fifteenth Century France," 313–57, and Grandeau, "Les Dames."

75. Gibbons, "Active Queenship," 315

76. Ibid., 330.

77. Ibid., 331. See Mooney, "Queenship in Fifteenth Century France," 371–75, for the names of Isabeau's officers.

78. Grandeau, "Les Dames," 133–35.

79. *Trois vertus.* Christine praises the Countess of Eu for her wise managerial skills and her honesty.

> Et ceste voye tenir a sage mainagiere rent aucunes fois plus de prouffit que meismes la droicte revenue de la terre, si comme le savoit bien faire la sage et prudent mainagiere, contesse de Eu . . . qui n'avoit point de honte de s'emploier elle meismes en tout honneste labeur de mainage. . . . Et de tel femme se puet bien dire la louenge que recite l'epistre Salemon de la sage femme. [And the practice of managing wisely sometimes renders more profit even than revenues from the land, as so well knew that sage and prudent manager, the Countess of Eu . . . who was not above taking on the honest work of household chores herself. . . . And the letter of Solomon about the wise woman can well be applied to such a woman.] (156).

80. Pintoin, 2:524. See Grandeau, "Les Dames," 203–5.

81. See *Cité des dames,* 420. Christine remarks: "Ne fu ce pas grant liberalité que la Dame de la Riviere, nommee Marguerite, qui ancores est en vie et femme fu jadis de messire Burel de la Riviere, premier chanberlan du sage roy Charles?" (Wasn't the liberality demonstrated by the dame de la Rivière, named Marguerite, who is still alive and was once the wife of Monsieur Bureau de la Rivière, first chamberlin of the wise King Charles V great?) She then goes on to tell the story of how Madame de la Rivière rescued a valiant old knight from debtor's prison.

82. Grandeau, "Les Dames," 217–18.
83. Thibault, 275.
84. Froissart, 15:54.
85. Chamberlin, *The Count of Virtue,* 176.
86. See Grandeau, "Les Dames," 237–38.
87. Printed in Simonsfeld, "Beiträge zur Bayersichen," 306.
88. Straub, *Herzog Ludwig,* 2.
89. Ibid., 186.
90. For details and clarification on the supposedly shady financial dealings between Isabeau and her brother, see Straub's *Herzog Ludwig,* 185–264. Eva Kovacs argues that Isabeau feared that she would be left penniless in France after the king's death, believed by many to be imminent. Thus she was preparing to return to Bavaria. She lent 57,000 francs to Louis of Bavaria to

> racheter des terres engagées, sous réserve de garanties fournies par trois membres de la Maison de Bavière, en vertu desquelles la propriété et les revenues de ce domaine devaient lui revenir au cas où elle déciderait de retourner dans son pays. . . . Nous sommes persuadée que les joyaux mentionnés passèrent au duc Louis parce qu'elle s'attendait à une telle éventualité.
>
> [to buy back the territories, guaranteed by three members of the House of Bavaria that ownership and the revenus of the domain would return to her if she decided to return to her home. . . . We are persuaded that the jewels mentioned above went to Louis because she was expecting such an event to take place.] (Kovacs, *L'Age d'or,* 100)

91. Although Louis of Bavaria did take a leading role after the fall of the Cabochians in 1413 when the Armagnacs took power. Straub, *Herzog Ludwig,* 160–83.
92. Straub, *Herzog Ludwig,* 43.
93. Famiglietti, *Royal Intrigue,* 27–28.
94. Straub, *Herzog Ludwig,* 46.
95. Grandeau, "Les Dernières Années," 415–16.
96. Grandeau, "Les Dernières Années," 414, and "Les Dames," 158.
97. Grandeau, "Les Dernières Années," 427n49; AN XIA 8853, f. 327 v.
98. Grandeau, "Les Dernières Années," 413.
99. Solterer, "Making Names, Breaking Lives," 204.
100. Ibid., 215.
101. For accounts of the arrest of the queen's entourage, see Monstrelet, 2:352–54; Fèvre de Saint Rémy, *Choix de chroniques,* 80–82; Pintoin, 5:44–46.
102. Juvénal des Ursins, 488.
103. Froissart, 15:96.
104. Hirschbiegel, *Etrennes,* 383.

105. See Jarry, "La 'Voie de fait,'" 535–49.
106. Grandeau, "Les Dames," 57.
107. Ibid., 157.
108. Clin, *Isabeau de Bavière,* 258.

Conclusion

1. Isabeau does not figure either in the translation of Nora's *Realms of Memory* or in the French original, a significantly more substantial work with its more numerous entries. Joan of Arc, however, does receive a chapter. Winock's article on the maid appears in 3:433–482 of the English version, *Realms of Memory,* and in the third section of *Les Lieux de mémoire,* 3:674–733.
2. Nora, *Realms of Memory,* 1:xxiv.
3. Crawford, *Perilous Performances.*
4. Ibid., 206.
5. On ownership of tapestries illustrating the *Cité des dames,* see Susan Groag Bell, *The Lost Tapestries.*
6. See Willard, "Anne de France," 59–70 and, also by the same author, "The Manuscript Tradition," 433–44.
7. On the circulation of the *Trois vertus,* see Willard, "The Manuscript Tradition."
8. See Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre des fais et bonnes meurs,* 1:xli–xlvi.
9. Even after the principle received the name by which it is known today, its association with the *De allodis* clause of the *Lex Salica,* code of law compiled by Clovis, bothered many commentators. For the clause did not exclude women from the throne: it has nothing to do with royal succession but rather with the transmission of property. When was the Salic Law proclaimed a fundamental law of the kingdom? Possibly Richard Lescot had already claimed that the *De allodis* clause excluded women from succession to the French throne in 1358. However, the attribution is not certain, for it may be a later insertion. See Giesey, "The Juristic Basis of Dynastic Right," 17. The Salic Law as the mode of devolution of the throne to the nearest male heir is mentioned unmistakeably only around 1409–13 in Jean de Montreuil's *A Toute la chevalerie,* where he specifically cites the *De allodis* clause as support for the exclusion of women from the French throne. See Beaune, *Naissance de la nation France,* 252–64. See also Jean de Montreuil, *Opera,* 2:7–17. The fundamental study on the exclusion of women from the French throne is Viollet, "Comment les femmes ont été exclues." See also Taylor, "The Salic Law, French Queenship and the Defence of Women" and "The Salic Law and the Valois Succession to the French Crown." See also Taylor's introduction to his *Debating the The Hundred Years War:* Pour ce que plusieurs (La Loi Salicque) *and* A Declaracion of the Trew and Dewe Title of Henry VIII, 1–49, where he describes the malaise of Jean de Montreuil regarding use of the

Lex Salica as the source of female exclusion. Viennot offers a different story of the law's development, arguing that it arose out of a tradition of misogyny. See Viennot, *La France,* 347–90.

10. Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre du corps de policie,* 93.

11. See Dulac, "Entre héroïsation et admonestation," 91–113, esp. 96–97, for the numerous places in Christine's works where the poet emphasizes the Valois' unbroken lineage reaching back to the Trojans.

12. Luyt, *Le Sceptre de France en quenouille,* cited in Cosandey, "De Lance en quenouille," 815–16.

13. Heckmann, *Stellvertreter,* 1:306.

14. See Girard, *The Scapegoat,* esp. chaps 2 and 3. Girard's analysis of Marie Antoinette offers an interesting parallel with Isabeau: "The queen belongs to several familiar categories of victims of persecution; she is not only a queen but a foreigner. Her Austrian origin is mentioned repeatedly in the popular accusations against her. The court that condemns her is heavily influenced by the Paris mob" (20).

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